

COMIC.

THE FIVE CENT

WIDE AWAKE LIBRARY

Entered at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., as Second Class Matter.

No. 12.

{ COMPLETE. }

FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 34 & 36 North Moore St., N. Y.
NEW YORK, October 2, 1878.

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY.

{ PRICE }

{ 5 CENTS. }

Vol. I.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1878, by FRANK TOUSEY, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.



"Go shoot yourself!" replied the boy, at the same time placing his thumb on his nose and wriggling his fingers in the most comical way.

SHORTY; OR, Kicked Into Good Luck.

BY PETER PAD.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCING A QUEER LITTLE HERO.

JEHIAL BILLBERRY was reading an old piece of a story paper that he had picked up somewhere, and had got very much interested in one of the characters of a story, or a part of one, and after having read and re-read the scrap, he was now trying, by the aid of his somewhat sluggish imagination, to complete the story, when his wife spoke.

"Do, for the good Lord's sake, Jehial, go out and see what's the matter with that dog," said Mrs. Billberry.

The old lady was darning stockings at the time, and she mentally said "darn" the confounded dog.

"Why, lordy, massy, ole woman, let the dorg bark

if he wants ter," said he, a trifle vexed at the interruption which had thrown his imagination off the track, and caused him to lose the thread of the story.

"Wants ter!" she sneered; "but do you s'pose the neighborhood wants ter be hearin' that everlastin' bow-wow?"

"I guess they don't mind it."

"Well, I guess they do; I've hearn complaints about him several times, an' I don't blame 'em either. If he wasn't such an alfred homely dog people could stand it a great sight better; leastwise, I could."

"Wal, I s'pose he's treed a cat, or suthin' out there," put in the farmer.

"But I tell you he's a public nuisance. He never does anything but bark, the great, overgrown cur!"

"Don't wag your jaw so as ter shake your spectacles off," said the old man, laughing at his better-half.

"And the idea of his 'having a cat up a tree. Why he's too big a coward to tree a mouse; or if he has got one up a tree, or anywhere else, I guess he's trying to bark her to sleep."

"I wish he'd bark you ter sleep, old woman."

"Now you start yourself out, and kick that yaller-looking cur under the barn!" said the old woman, with some force.

"Oh, wal," he muttered, as he started to obey.

Going out at the side door, and so around the corner of the house, all the while wishing that his boots had been newly half-soled, and coming close to the dog, of what he considered kicking distance, he brought back one of his huge feet, and sent it after the dog with a velocity that certainly would have kicked him over the barn had it hit him.

He had only got fairly at the story once more when the dog set up the barking again, and the old lady got up on her ear at once.

"Jehial Billberry!" was all she said, but Jehial knew what it meant, and resolved to get square.

So he crept cautiously out and around the corner of the house, all the while wishing that his boots had been newly half-soled, and coming close to the dog, of what he considered kicking distance, he brought back one of his huge feet, and sent it after the dog with a velocity that certainly would have kicked him over the barn had it hit him.

But the dog jumped just then, and got out of his way, while the momentum of Jehial's foot made him turn a complete somersault and land on his head in his wife's flower-bed.

to see if his neck was broken, and finding that it was not, he let himself out on some tall swearing.

"Rot blast that cussed dorg! I'll—I'll," and he began hunting around for a stone that wouldn't weigh less than a pound, wherewith to break a rib or two of the dog who had escaped his boot so artfully.

But he couldn't find a stone, and to make matters worse, he picked up a great, speckled garden toad instead, and then with a shudder he got up and cussed some more in another key, while the dog ran around the house to see something.

"Rot blast his pieter! I'll borrow Mr. Jipp's gun to-morrow and fill him full of shot, see if I don't. Gracious! what a wonder it hadn't broke my neck," he added, again rubbing his badly bumped head.

As he turned to go back to the house his eyes fell on a large bundle that lay upon the front doorstep. He started back and looked again. Then he slowly crept up a little nearer to it. He saw a movement in it.

"Peggy—Peggy!" he yelled, as he started for around the corner of the house. "Quick—quick! Bring a light!"

He met her as she was coming from the back door with a light in her hand.

"Oh, Peg," he gasped.

"What is it?"

"I dunno."

"What! What is the matter with you? You look as though you had seen a ghost."

"Oh, I—I guess I have. I—"

"Where—what—who?"

"Round here," he said, in a whisper.

"Round where?"

"On the front doorstep."

"What is it, you simpleton?"

"A bundle, or somethin'."

"A bundle!"

"Ya-s."

"But what are you so wonderfully scared at a bundle for?"

"It—it moves!"

"Nonsense, Jehial! If you war a drinkin' man, I should say you 'had 'em.' Come on, let's see what it is," said she, starting to go around to the front of the house.

"Don't go, Peggy."

"Why not?"

"It may be somethin' awful."

"Bah! and it might be only a newspaper or something like that. Come along."

"Well, be careful, Peggy," he said, as he tremblingly followed his better half.

Better half she was indeed, for she had ten times the courage that her husband possessed.

Arriving at the front doorstep the light fell on a bundle about two feet long, from which two little feet stuck out, and were kicking away right lively.

"Why, Jehial Billberry, as sure as you're alive, man, it's a baby!" said she.

"A baby!"

"Yes, a live baby."

"Ger-a-cious!"

"Yes, somebody has left it here, just as we read about in the papers sometimes."

"Ger-a-cious, Peggy!" and the old man drew nearer.

"Take it up, Jehial."

"Me? No, I don't want ter."

"Why not? Won't let it stay here, will you? Are you afraid of it?"

"No, but—"

"But you are awfully timid, though. You and your dog are well mated."

"That war what he were barkin' at."

"Here, hold the light," and handing the lamp to her husband, Mrs. Billberry lifted the kicking bundle and started into the house, followed by her timid lord and master.

"Gracious! it's heavy enough, I hope," said she, depositing it on the table. "Hold the light."

"Be careful, Peggy."

"Nonsense! What is there to be 'feard of? Who on earth could have left it? Why, it's got scarcely anything on it," she said, opening the coarse blanket in which it was wrapped.

The child thus brought to light was as queer a looking specimen of humanity as was ever seen. How old it was would have puzzled a six-foot-doctor to tell; but while both of the good people stood looking at it in wonder, it arose to a sitting position on the table, and gazed queerly around the room.

"It's a boy, Peggy," said Billberry.

"Yes; and the homeliest one I ever saw. I don't blame the parents for wanting ter get rid of it, that I don't."

"Ger-a-cious!"

"I'm sure he don't belong 'round here."

"Ger-a-cious, no!"

"Who are you, youngster?" she asked.

"Bread an' butter," spoke the child, plain enough to be understood.

"Ger-a-cious, Peggy, he can talk!"

"Why, he must be three or four years old."

"Bread an' butter," again whined the foundling.

"Wal, I declare!"

"I'll give him some," and going to the cupboard she spread a large piece and brought it to the queer little stranger, who went for it as a hen would go for a grasshopper.

"Ger-a-cious, but he's hungry. See him go for it. Oh, my!"

"He's nearly starved."

"But who could have left him here?"

"The Lord only knows. Some tramp, I suppose, knowing that you are the poormaster."

"It must be so. They couldn't have had an idea that we would adopt it," and they stood there watching the child devour the bread.

After he put it out of sight, she gave him a cup of milk, which he drank without taking it from his lips; then he called for more bread and butter, evidently knowing that he had struck a bonanza of eatables.

"Ger-a-cious, but he's a feeder!"

"Well, he shall have his bellyful for once in his life, if he never does again," and she gave him another slice of bread and butter.

CHAPTER II.

WHEREIN OUR LITTLE HERO FINDS A PERMANENT HOME AT THE EXPENSE OF THE TOWN.

Mr. and Mrs. Billberry watched the queer little foundling while he got outside of his second slice.

He had nothing to say, but once, when Mr. Billberry expressed his astonishment at his appetite, the comical fellow looked up at him, and placing his thumb to his nose, he wriggled his fingers in the most laughable manner.

"Ger-a-cious!" exclaimed Billberry, "he is a dwarf clown," and they both laughed at the comical antic, while the little one paid attention only to his grub.

"Where did you come from, little one?" asked the wife.

"Bread and butter," he grunted.

"I guess not. You've had enough for one meal. Here, take another drink of milk."

"Ger-a-cious!"

"I think a good washing would do as much good as anything," but the little one made no reply, evidently never having known about any such a thing.

Mrs. Billberry was naturally a kind-hearted woman, and in spite of its being such a queer shaped little fellow, her heart went out towards him as it would have done to a handsomer child that was thus lone and friendless, and as one of her particular traits was cleanliness, she got a tub of water and some soap, and after taking off the child's old dress, in spite of his plucky fight in opposition to it, and his whine for more bread and butter, she got him into the tub and went for him with a scrubbing brush.

This process gave them a good chance to see what he was like, and after the dirt had been washed off, he looked considerably different.

And he could talk very well, as she soon learned, for he struck at her and used cuss words that he must have learned from a much older person.

But it was evident that he was at least five years old, and as near as they could judge, he was just recovering from the effect of some drug given to make him sleep when they found him, for now he was himself again, and could walk, and talk, and fight like a little tiger.

To look at he seemed deformed.

His head was very large, his features coarse and old-looking, while his legs were very short and small, and his body large and long.

To all intents and purposes he was a miniature Little Mack, whom most of my readers have doubtless seen.

To all appearances he was strong and healthy in every way, but of course he was too young to know anything about himself, and so after being washed, and getting outside of another piece of bread and butter, he was put to bed in a little bed-room off of the sitting-room and soon went to sleep, leaving the farmer and his wife to sit up and speculate upon the strange occurrence.

The next morning the little fellow was up before them, and began to prow around on a voyage of discovery, partially to see how the land lay, and mostly to see if he could find anything to eat.

In this he was successful; and when Mrs. Billberry came out of her bed-room to see if he was all right, missing him from the bed where she had placed him, she began to look around, and presently found him upon the second shelf in the buttery, where he was holding on with one hand, and with the other was scooping in some of her preserves, having in the meantime daubed himself from head to foot with them.

"You imp of thunder!" she exclaimed, as she jerked him down out of there. "I should like to know what you are, anyway?"

"You bet," was his only reply.

"Yes, I bet, and I bet I'll have you walked out of this before long."

"You bet."

"Look at yourself, you naughty thing!"

"You bet."

"Come here, and let me wash you," said she, as she started for some water.

Procuring it, she returned to wash her foundling, but he had disappeared, evidently remembering last night, and having no love for water.

Where he had gone to she could not tell.

She hunted high and low, and then routed her husband out of bed to assist her.

Finally they found him in a large meal bucket.

He had crawled into it, worked himself down into the meal, and then placed the cover over it in such a way as to be completely hidden.

But he got snaked out of that on the double quick, and once more received a good washing, although he kicked and yelled like a little devil all the while.

Finally she got him all right, and started about getting breakfast, while the little rascal continued his observations about the place, and in less than an hour had got into more mischief than an ordinary child would have got into in a whole week.

He had tied the cat and dog together, and got up a lively little fight between them; had caught a chicken and given it a bath, and at the same time had his eyes nearly picked out by the old hen; had thrown the ax and hoe down the well, pulled up about half of Mrs. Billberry's flowers, got stung on the nose for fooling around a bee-hive, and in all respects had made himself perfectly at home, as he darted around with his scanty allowance of clothing.

"You varmint, you!" exclaimed Mrs. Billberry, as she seated him savagely at the table for his breakfast. "I shall be glad when you are gone. Now make the most of this meal, for it is the last one you will get in this house. I'll warrant you. It is no wonder your parents wanted to get rid of you, for you are the worst brat I ever saw. Now, Jehial Billberry, you swallow your breakfast just as quick as you can, and take this homely torment over to the poorhouse."

"Wal, yes, but —"

"No buts. I won't have him here."

"But the Board of Directors."

"Hang the Board of Directors. You take him away at once."

"You bet," chimed the little one.

"Yes, I do bet, you awful creature."

"More—more," he said, lifting his plate up, after having put away a good, square meal.

But she gave him all he could eat, and then, when breakfast was over, Mr. Billberry, being the town poormaster, took this mischievous waif and started with him for the poorhouse.

I hope none of my readers will ever be unfortunate enough to get into a country poorhouse, for going to prison is a charm compared with it.

They have the strictest sort of rules and regulations, and if a poor wretch is on the verge of starvation, they will not give him a mouthful unless he belongs to that particular locality.

But so far as our little hero was concerned, he could not tell where he came from, and having no means of finding out, they could but receive him, at least, temporarily, and until the Board of Directors could pass upon his case.

The poorhouse at Coram, Long Island, is conducted on the usual style of the country institutions of this kind. There was a portion of it devoted to foundlings and orphans, and this particular department was presided over by a fat matron, assisted by Mr. Billberry, the poormaster, and Dr. Verry-deep, a man with a country practice and with tremendous notions regarding his own great ability.

In addition to this, there were several of the most influential citizens who took a great interest in social waifs and the mending of public morals; and they lent their assistance to the institution by acting as Board of Directors for the consideration of cases and applications for relief.

Among these were Deacon Scrouger and Miss Jemima Pin; the first, a mean old cuss, with about as much pity as brains, and the latter an old maid, possessed of about as much charity as beauty.

Mr. Poormaster Billberry took the foundling to the poorhouse, and then summoned the Board, Deacon Scrouger, Dr. Verry-deep, and Miss Pin responded, and these, in connection with the matron, Mrs. Lumpy, and Mr. Billberry, proceeded to investigate the case, and decide what should be done with it.

Mr. Billberry placed our handsome little hero on the table in the reception-room of the poorhouse, and these lovely people gathered around to inspect him and to listen to the story of his at-t.

Deacon Scrouger was shocked at the amount of devilry that seemed to be held within the little fellow's skin, while Miss Pin held up her hands in pious horror, and said that he should be placed under the influences of the gospel as quickly as possible.

Dr. Verry-deep was disposed to go into the case much deeper, of course.

He could not look upon things in a superficial way, to be sure. Was he not a physician, and without doubt the most learned man in Coram?

"My friends," said he, with one of his peculiar smiles, which was intended to show how much at ease he was while discussing a great question, "we have here a freak of nature."

"Oh, Lord!" moaned Miss Pin.

"A freak of natur!" said Deacon Scrouger, looking as though something terrible had happened, although he hadn't the remotest idea what a freak of nature was.

"Goodness me!" chimed Mrs. Lumpy.

"Yes, a *lapsus naturus*," continued the doctor.

"Oh, my! worse and worse!" said Miss Pin.

"What is the world coming to?" asked the deacon, just as though he understood Latin.

"I knowed there was something the matter with him," said Mrs. Lumpy.

"Yes, my friends and fellow workers in the cause of humanity, we have before us a singular case of *prolapsus dumbfoundabus*," continued the doctor.

The whole Board of Directors uttered a concerted sigh, and raised their hands and eyes to heaven.

"The subject is abnormally developed in the un-sefogus region."

"Oh, Lord!" they all moaned.

"Ulterior influences worked uncannily upon his period of gestation, and the result is now before us."

"Dry up!" shouted the 'subject,' whereat the en

the board raised their hands and eyes again, and said:

"Oh—oh!"

"Be quiet, you little *lapses*," said the matron.

"Go shoot yourself!" replied the boy, at the same time placing his thumb to his nose, and wriggling his fingers in the most comical way.

"Oh, the little wretch!"

"Oh, the *lapses*!"

"Oh, the *dumbfoundables*!"

But still the boy wriggled his fingers, first to one and then another of those standing around the table.

"Go bust!" said he.

"Be still, you ungrateful wretch!" said Miss Pin, looking awfully severe.

"Don't mind him, my friends and co-laborers in humanitarianism, he cannot help it. He was born

fell on top of him, nearly making a wafer of him, while Miss Pin screamed and clung to the doctor for support.

Meanwhile, Shorty clung to the boy's hair just as though it was as much fun for the boy as it was for him; and when the confusion occasioned by the tumble of the deacon and the matron had in a measure subsided, then there was another rush to rescue the boy, who was flopping about like a hen with its head off.

Mr. Billberry yelled at Shorty, and jumped forward to pull them apart, but as the confusion was very great he stepped heavily upon the deacon's toes, causing him to howl and say things that are not found in sermons or Sunday-school lessons.

"You are an idiot, Billberry!" he howled, dancing around the room on one leg, with his foot in both hands.

"And remember that we should forgive our enemies," said Miss Pin.

"Not when they tread on our corns, I'll be hanged if we do."

"You know I did not mean to do it."

"But that does not stop the aching."

"Oh, ah!" shouted the doctor, for by this time, Shorty, whom he held by the leg, had got himself around like a cat, and had set his teeth into his hand so vigorously that he was only too glad to let him drop.

It was fully half an hour before things were quieted down and a line of action agreed upon.

The boy whose hair had been so badly pulled went out of the room, shaking his head and fist at Shorty, and vowing to get even with him, while the little comical cuss again mounted the table, and began to call for something to eat.



Quick as thought the mule seized him with his teeth, taking him by the slack of his breeches and shaking him as a terrier would shake a rat.

into the world just as we see him, and we must put up with his sayings and doings just as we would put up with the chatter of a parrot."

"But how about the influence of religion upon him?" asked Miss Pin.

"How would it do to send him to Sunday-school?" asked Deacon Scrouger.

"That is for you to determine. My opinion is that the mellowing influences of your good offices will redeem the misfortune of his birth. Work with him, and I will assist you with all that science and medicine can do."

This being agreed to, they all began to converse about the case, while another boy, a foundling like himself, approached, and proceeded to give him a good looking over.

"Hallo, Shorty, how is it?" he asked.

"You bet," was the prompt reply.

"Got a good appetite?"

"You bet."

"Better peg out of this, then. Feed yer on pudden an' 'lasses here."

"Pudden an' 'lasses good," replied Shorty, for from this point, having no other name, we will give him this.

"It is, hey?" growled the lad.

By this time Shorty had worked himself along on the table, and before the other boy was aware of what was coming, he put out both hands and seized him by the hair of the head.

The boy pulled back, of course, but Shorty did not let go, and the result was that he was pulled from the table, and they both went tumbling over upon the floor, howling and yelling like a couple of cats.

Then there was a rush by the board to learn what had happened, and in the excitement, Deacon Scrouger tumbled over a chair, and Mrs. Lumpy

"You are another!" yelled Billberry, who had got a punch in the stomach.

"You lie, you old dromedary!"

"What is that you say?"

They were going for each other when Miss Pin came between them.

"Brother Scrouger, I am astonished!"

"So am I, Sister Pin; I am astonished at Billberry's stupidity."

"Be careful, sir."

"Go to thunder!"

"No, I won't."

"Well, I don't care a rap where you go, if you will only take your big feet with you."

"Look at your own gunboats."

"Look at these boys," put in the doctor, who had in the meantime been trying to get Shorty's fingers out of the other fellow's hair.

"Yes, kill the little cuss," said the deacon.

"Why, Brother Scrouger!" said Miss Pin, holding up her hands.

"Well, the whole thing is a nuisance, and Billberry's a jackass!" howled the old man, as he hobbled around and nursed his foot.

"I'll pound your head!"

"You'll pound nobody's head."

"Yes, when I pound yours."

"Now—now, hold on here," said the doctor, who had succeeded in getting Shorty away from his victim, and was holding him up by one leg. "What kind of an example is this to be setting to those under you?"

"Yes, goodness, yes," put in Miss Pin. "I am astonished."

"So are my corns!" howled the deacon.

"Never mind. I have some salve that will make them all right again."

"I'll fix you," said Mrs. Lumpy. "I'll give you something to eat."

"And I will attend to your moral training," said Miss Pin, all the while looking as though she could roast him over a slow fire.

"Shoot yourself," said Shorty, turning a somersault on the table, completely shocking the old maid, who believed that everything of the male gender should wear more clothes.

But finally the board withdrew, and Shorty was left with the matron. As for Miss Pin, she promised to call every day and attend to his moral education.

Mrs. Lumpy made up her mind that she had got her hands full with Shorty; but she declared that she would break him of his devilry or break his neck.

Weeks and months rolled away, and yet she could not change his disposition. Miss Pin tried to make a good little boy of him, but soon learned that it was impossible to make a silk purse out of a pig's ear. True, she had taught him to read a little by hiring him to study with candy and fruit that she brought him, but he was continually up to some mischief or other, and she finally gave him up as a bad job.

At the end of a year he was regarded as an incurable—a good-for-nothing—and a job was put up to bind him out to a farmer living within a few miles of New York.

He had grown to be a strong lad, and excelled in anything that required muscle and daring, although he hated books, and most everything that most boys take to.

The farmer, whose name was Bitts, signed an agreement with the authorities of Coram, wherein he agreed to take the boy, give him three months' schooling each year, and feed and clothe him un-

that he was twenty-one years of age, for which he was to be entitled to his services.

Shorty rather liked the change, for he had had a rough time of it during his stay at the Coram poorhouse, and had received beatings enough to kill a mule. Anything to get away from Mrs. Lumpy, who was as devoid of feeling as she was of grace and piety.

And they were as glad to get rid of him as he was to get away. Young and little as he was, he had managed to get into all sorts of scrapes. He had been walloped by the matron and the larger boys, although a few of them had marks to remember him by.

As yet not a word regarding his parentage had been learned, and to all intents and purposes he was a nobody, and seemed destined to be kicked about all his life.

So Mr. Bitts took him to his home, and Shorty promised to be one of the best boys in the world. He felt that he should at least have enough to eat if he did have to work.

Mr. Bitts was a pretty nice man, although his wife was quite his opposite, and when Shorty came home she made all sorts of fun of his appearance, and conceived a fierce dislike to him at once, a fact that he did not fail to notice, young as he was. Nor was he well received by the other members of the family; but he made up his mind to hoe his own little row.

CHAPTER III.

It will be remembered that Shorty was not very well received in his new home.

Mr. Bitts seemed to be his only friend, and as he soon learned, he played second fiddle in his own house, where his wife wore the breeches, and did the heavy bossing around.

She looked at him a few moments in utter amazement.

"Law sakes alive, Tos, what is it?"

His name was Thomas, but she always called him "Tos."

"Why, don't you see?"

"No, I'll be hanged if I do. Why, he's the veriest little runt I ever saw in my life."

"Well, we are all little once," said he.

"That may be so, but I'll be skinned with a curry-comb if everybody's as homely as he is."

Shorty felt like putting his oar in, but remembering what a good boy he had promised to be, concluded to wait awhile.

"Well, he might be handsomer," said Farmer Bitts, with a broad grin.

"There's one sure thing, he couldn't possibly be any homelier. Well—well!" she exclaimed.

"Maybe he'll grow handsomer."

"There's a first-rate chance for it. But he is too small to work any. He can't earn his salt."

"Well, he'll grow, Nancy. You see we've got him 'til he's twenty-one."

"How long is that, I wonder. How old are you?" she asked, turning sharply to Shorty.

"I give it up, ole gal," replied Shorty.

"What's that you say? You give it up?"

"In course I do. How's a cove going ter guess a conundrum when he don't know?"

"Don't you know how old you are?"

"Nixy. Don't remember."

"What is your name, you horrid thing?"

"Shorty," was the reply.

"Shorty?"

"You bet."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, I'm hungry."

"Well, you want to speak a trifle more civil, or you will get strewn all over this farm. I'll have you know that we don't have no poorhouse brats coming here with their sauce."

"You must speak and act politely," said Mr. Bitts, calmly.

"Wal, I'm a good 'nuff cove if yer don't starve me almost to death an' sass me."

"Well, you remember what I say, for you are my boy now, and must behave yourself."

"Yes, or get whaled," put in his wife.

"All right, only I don't know 'bout any name but Shorty, only Marm Lumpy said as how they would call me Shorty Bitts, now."

"No, they won't. No such a looking pup as you are, can ever take my name."

"But I'm awfully hungry."

"I dare say you are. If you are homely and saucy, I'll bet you've got a good appetite. I don't believe he is good for anything."

"Well, Mr. Billberry, the poormaster of Coram, says he's as strong as a little bull, and can work first-rate if he has a mind to."

"We shall see. But you want to mind what I told you about giving sass, Mr. Shorty. Come along, and let's see how much you can eat," said she, leading the way to the kitchen.

Shorty was gawking around and taking in his new home with all his eyes.

The dog barked and growled at him, and the cat put her back up, and ran spitting under the stove.

"I don't blame 'em much," thought Mrs. Bitts, as she proceeded to set some cold victuals upon the table. Shorty was on the point of kicking them.

"Wal, I'll let up on 'em if they don't come fo'lin' 'round my grub," replied Shorty.

"Didn't they give you anything to eat in the poorhouse?"

"Gin us pudden' an' 'lasses."

"Is that all?"

"Some days we had a change."

"What did they give you then?"

"Lasses an' pudden," replied Shorty, while his whole mug was dressed up in a grin.

Mrs. Bitts looked at him a moment without saying a word.

"Young man, you're too smart."

"Want me ter drop on myself?"

"What?" she asked, not understanding slang.

"Want me ter swaller my gab?"

"Do what?"

"Wipe off my chin?"

"I don't understand any such gabble as that."

"Shall I dry up 'round der chin?" he asked, seeing that he was puzzling her more and more.

"Get down and eat your grub, and let it stop your mouth," said she, sharply.

"Dat's der kind o' cacklin' I like to hear," said he, sliding into a chair.

Mrs. Bitts took a seat by the window and watched him.

She was right when she said he had a good appetite, for the way those cold potatoes and boiled pork vanished before him was a caution to boarding-house keepers.

She watched him with much anxiety, and soon came to the conclusion that unless he could do a man's work, it would be a losing speculation to keep him until he was twenty-one for his victuals and clothing.

After he got through with his dinner, Mr. Bitts took him out to the barn and made him acquainted with everything about the farm.

Shorty concluded that he should like his new home tolerably well, provided that he could get along with the old woman.

Mr. Bitts then took him out to the woodshed and set him to work cutting up a lot of limbs for firewood.

This was not exactly new to him, for at the poorhouse he had been made to do a little of almost everything, especially cutting wood; so Mr. Bitts went away and left him at work.

He worked away for some time, while his thoughts were busy regarding the new and better home that he had been kicked into.

Presently a cat came prowling around. She was one of about dozen that boarded with Mr. Bitts, and as she happened to get her tail in the way, Shorty chopped it off so quickly that she hardly knew it at first.

But she soon found it out, and scudded far under the barn out of sight, while Shorty laughed and wondered how the cat could steer herself. He found out afterwards.

At night the negro boy, Josh, came in from the field, where he had been at work, and saw Shorty for the first time. He laughed, and seemed to think him exceedingly comical.

"Oh, by gosh! what a funny little cuss you be!" he said, looking him all over.

"Go whitewash yerself," was Shorty's only reply, at which Josh roared and laughed until it seemed as though all of his head above his mouth would split off and fall over backwards.

"An' so youse de new boy, hey?"

"Don't look like a very old boy, does I?"

"Dat's mighty good, by gosh! What's yer name?"

"I'll never tell yer."

"Why not?"

"Cos I don't know it, dat's why."

"Dun gone—habn't got no name? Wal, 'clar ter gracious! How old be yer?"

"Not quite fifty yet."

"Oh, by gosh! dar am anodder joke!" and once more did the darkey laugh and roar.

"Got any more hard questions?"

"Not now, I guess. Hab you?"

"Wal, yes. How long afore supper'll be ready?"

"'Bout half an hour, I guess," replied Josh, still grinning.

"What's yer front name?"

"Josh."

"How old be yer?"

"'Bout forty, I guess. Why?"

"Nuffin, only I'm one of der family now, an' I don't want any back tork from yer," said Shorty, with a comical swag.

"Ho, by gosh! Did anybody hear dat?"

"Yer hear it, don't yer?"

"Ho, by gosh! Wal, by thunder, you hab got cheek 'nuff fo' a mule! Dat yer ole mule out dar in de barn am modest 'longside you, Shorty. Go 'long, chile."

"You bet. What yer going to do now?"

"Gwine fo' ter milk de cows. Can you milk?"

"No, but I'll go along and see you do it."

"Come right along, honey, an' I'll 'nitiate yer right inter der business," said he, starting for the barnyard.

They chatted for a long time, while Josh was milking and showing Shorty how it was done. In fact, the darkey rather liked him before they had known each other half an hour.

It was nearly dark, and the flies bothered the cows very much, causing them to switch their tails, which plagued Josh, and made him swear, occasionally, hard enough to kill a mosquito.

So he told Shorty to hold the tail of the cow he was milking, which he proceeded to do, and as it made matters so much better for Josh and the flies, if not for the cows, he was taken along night and morning to hold the cows' tails.

One night, at about dark, Shorty managed to tie a string to one of the cows' tails, one that had just been milked, and was standing about two yards away, and the other end, that had a little fish-hook

attached, he fastened slyly to Josh's hat, just as he sat down to milk another.

By this little arrangement, whenever the cow switched her tail in one direction, it would pull the darkey's hat off. He picked it up and replaced it once, and when she switched it off again, he began to wonder what the trouble was. Still, he did not see the string, or the "string" that Shorty had him on.

"Gosh an' thunder! Hole on dat cow's tail."

"I am holdin' it," said Shorty, innocently.

"Dar it goes again," he said, as the cow jerked it off once more. "Who dat?" he added, looking from one cow to another, and seeing no reason why they should disturb him.

"What's der matter?"

"Who jerk off my hat?"

"How'd I know?"

"Well, somebody better stop dat foolin' wid me, dat's all I can say," he said, replacing the hat once more, and returning to his milking in rather a sulken humor.

The truth was, he suspected that Shorty was bothering him in this way for fun, and so he kept his big eye peeled to catch him.

"Foolin's foolin', but knocking a man's hat off inter dis yer nastiness an't jes' no foolin' what I likes," he muttered.

Hardly had he finished speaking, when away went his hat for about the fifth time.

But Josh had his eye on Shorty, and saw that he had both hands employed in holding the cow's tail.

"Now, by gosh, dar's gwine fo' ter be trouble fo' somebody," said he, getting up from the stool where he had been sitting. "Go 'long way dar!" he added, giving the innocent old cow a kick.

As the cow moved away, of course the hat that was tied to her tail commenced to follow her, greatly to the astonishment of the angry darkey.

"Golly, look dar!" said Josh, pointing to it.

"What's der matter wid it?"

"By gosh, de debbil mus' be in it, sure."

Shorty ran and picked it up, breaking off the string without being observed, and returned it to Josh; but never again would he wear that hat, verily believing that it was bewitched.

But Shorty managed to have a great deal of fun with Josh, and had it not been for the old woman, he would have felt all right and happy.

She was at him continually, and secretly made up her mind to torment him until he got mad and ran away, after which she would take good care that he was not caught and brought back. But there was no love wasted between them.

Josh was the best subject for him to work on, for he took most everything in good part, and Shorty was as full of mischief as his clothes were full of meat.

Josh worked with the mule a great deal, and Shorty had played one or two tricks on the long-eared animal, and on account of one of them Josh had been lifted by the hind legs of that mule, and landed on the other side of a high fence.

But Josh did not know that Shorty was the cause of the mischief, although the mule did, and remembered it. In fact, while Josh was whaling him for kicking him over the fence, he mentally sharpened his hind legs in anticipation of getting a chance to use them on Shorty.

But Josh caught him at it one day. He was mending the harness, and standing alongside the mule, when Shorty got around on the other side and pricked him with a pin.

The mule winked with first one ear and then the other, and knowing by experience that he could not reach Shorty any more than he could a fly, for he was as quick as a flash, he wheeled quickly around and raised Josh again.

The darkey was completely taken by surprise; for although he knew that the mule meant business, he was waiting with a broad grin on his face, expecting to see Shorty catch it, as he was well aware of what was going on.

But when he got kicked about two rods he proceeded to get mad, while Shorty proceeded to get out of the way.

"Oh, my gosh!" he groaned, as he picked himself up and felt around to see if he was all there. "Darn blast dat yer mule, an' darn blast dat yer little Shorty! Yer best clear out dar!" he yelled after him, "fo' if I once get a hold ob yer, I—I knock yer into 'bout seven hundred million pieces! an' don't yer fool yerself dat I won't nuther. Whoa, dar, you ole 'splorion!" he added, to the mule. "Wha' yer want ter kick me fo'? By gosh, I'se a mind ter put a big hole right inter yer belly!"

It is generally understood that a negro is the only thing that a mule can't kick to death.

"Better take care dar how you fool 'round dis chile. I'll harm yer, and don't yer forget it. Stop shakin' yer ears at me, or I'll jes' drive right fro' yer."

The mule made a motion as if to continue the fun it had been having with Josh, but he at once sprang back a step or two and then ran head first at it, giving it such a fearful butt that it nearly knocked the long-eared kicker over.

"Whoa, dar, now! 'Gwine fo' ter 'have yerself? Better not get mussin' wid me. I'se bad, I is, when a mule kick me tree fo' times. Whoa!"

The mule seemed perfectly satisfied to "whoa," for Josh had evidently given it a bellyache.

So he resumed work on the harness, while Shorty stole cautiously back to see if there was any more fun to be had.

"Say, Josh!" he called.

"Better keep lot 'way from me."
 "Say, you wouldn't get mad wid a little cove like me, would yer?"
 "I give yer fair warning dat I shall harm you, so look out."
 "I didn't do nuffin'."
 "Didn't I see yer foolin' 'round the mule?"
 "Didn't I see him foolin' 'round you?" asked Shorty, laughing.
 "Yas, and yer'll see me foolin' 'round you if I gets a hold ob yer."
 "I was only brushing a fly off him," he said, coming closer.
 "All right; I brush several flies off you de fus chance I get."
 "Say, Josh, wouldn't dat mule make a bully foot-ball player?"
 "I only hope he get one kick at you, you little runt. He knock you 'bout ten miles."

teeth, taking him by the slack of his breeches, and shaking him as a terrier would shake a rat.
 Shorty yelled like blazes, and Josh roared with laughter.
 It was serving him just right, and it was fully a minute before the tickled darkey could get his head together, or seem to realize that Shorty was in danger.
 "Drop him!" he shouted; but the mule only shook him the harder, and seemed to be sorry that he could not reach him with his heels.
 Finally Josh was obliged to dismount and give him a good butting before he would drop his tormentor.
 But you can bet that Shorty wasn't long in picking himself up and paddling out of that.
 In fact, he gave that mule a rest afterwards.
 Well, things went on in that way for three or four months.

like a frog, smashing sash and glass into fine bits; but, strange as it may appear, without cutting him much.
 Old Mother Bitts was thunderstruck, and as mad as blazes at the same time. She fairly yelled with rage. Giving one glance at the overturned churn, she caught up the broom again and started for the door to overtake the harlequin and give him what he deserved.
 But her husband, hearing the crash of glass and screams, came rushing in to see what the matter was.
 She met him at the door.
 "Oh, you fool! oh, you idiot!" she yelled, and went for him with the broom.
 "Nancy—Nancy! Hold on, Nancy! What's the matter, Nancy?"
 "I'll matter you, you driveling idiot—I'll matter you!" she replied, whacking him.



He sneezed; he coughed; he rubbed his eyes, and finally abandoned the amusement and allowed Shorty to go to his seat.

"Oh, mules don't like to kick white folks."
 "I just tell Mr. Bitts about you."
 "Oh, Bittsy an' I'r all right."
 "Wal, I tell Mrs. Bitts about your deviltrum."
 "Don't yer do it, Josh, an' I'll steal yer some of der ole man's terbacker."
 This partially silenced Josh, for he wanted tobacco more than he did piety. In fact, he could get along very well without piety, but being without tobacco made him unhappy.
 So little by little their trouble was patched up, and Shorty was again out of danger, as far as Josh was concerned.
 But that mule had its eyes on him. Tobacco wouldn't take the kinks out of his temper, and so that afternoon he watched and waited.
 They were working together in the field, and Shorty knew just enough to keep out of the reach of that mule's business end, hoping that time would restore his confidence, as it had with Josh.
 After the work was done Josh mounted the mule to ride back to the barn.
 "Arn't yer goin' ter let me ride?" asked Shorty.
 "Now, Shorty, you want to keep good ways 'way from dis yer animile. He's mad at you, an' if you should get on his back, he frow us both to de debil, shua," replied Josh.
 "Oh, you go shoot yourself."
 "Mine what I tole you, chile."
 "Let us ride, will you, Josh?"
 "Whoa! I clare tu gracious! See how mad he is. Go 'way."
 The truth was, Shorty had again pricked the mule, and dodged around to avoid his heels.
 But there was where he made a mistake; or rather he was away from one danger and into another, for quick as thought the mule seized him with his

Shorty was up to his deviltry all the while, and got some fearful bounces from Mrs. Bitts, who hated him so bad that she didn't treat him so well as she did the pigs; and Shorty, although he was afraid of her, never allowed an opportunity to pass where he had a chance to play a prank upon her.
 One day she kept him in to do the churning, for he was used quite as much in the house as he was outside.
 It was one of those old-fashioned churns—a tall barrel, larger at the bottom than it was at the top, with a dasher that played up and down through a hole in the cover.
 It was so high that Shorty was obliged to stand on a chair in order to work it.
 "Now you be mighty careful, you little runt, for if you slop over any of that cream I will break your thick head with that broomstick," said she, as he began to work the dasher up and down.
 "Yes'm."
 He worked away for some time, and finally Mrs. Bitts went out into the garden for something.
 "Now, by golly, I wonder if I can't get a snootful of dis cream," he said. "Oh, cream's awfully bully."
 He got down and took a spoon from the table and climbed back on to the chair again. Then, lifting the cover from the churn, he began to help himself to the cream, over which he was smacking his lips when Mrs. Bitts re-entered the room.
 She saw him just as he saw her. She uttered a yell, and went for him, and he, in his confusion, slipped from the chair, toppled the churn over, and went sprawling all into the spilled cream.
 The old woman caught up the broom and sprang for him. Shorty scrambled up out of the slippery mess, and before she could get a crack at him, he gave a spring and went through the window just

"Nancy, for heaven's sake, stop and tell me what it is all about?" pleaded the poor man.
 "You are an idiot, and deserve to be thrashed on principle! You deserve it for bringing that devilish boy here!"
 "Where is he—what has he done?"
 "Go in and see," said she, leaving him and going out in search of Shorty.
 But Shorty took first-rate care not to be found about that time. He was in the barn, hidden away in the hay mow.
 Poor Mr. Bitts felt awfully bad when he saw what had been done—not so much for the loss of things, as for the fearful loss of his wife's temper. He knew that there would be no more peace in that family for many a day, and he wished that Shorty was back to the Coran poorhouse, where, in fact, Shorty was wishing himself just about that time.
 Mrs. Bitts hunted high and low for Shorty, but could not find him, and when she returned to the house she was even wilder than when she went out. With one sweep of her broom she knocked the bob-tailed cat into a cocked hat, for presuming to go for that spilt cream, and then aimed another whack at her husband.
 But he avoided it by leaping through the window that Shorty had left without glass, and he found employment for the remainder of the day as far away from the house as he could get.
 As for Shorty, he knew that she would just about scalp him if she got near enough, and he still laid low and waited for night to come.
 He had a good chance to think, and he thought the best thing he could do would be to get up and dust out of that.
 It was a good home, the best he had ever known, all but the old woman.
 She was a perfect she-devil, and knowing that she

hated him, he felt sure that matters would be getting worse and worse the longer he stayed.

As for Mrs. Bitts, the only consolation she found was in the hope that he had lit out, and that she should never see him again. In fact, this hope tended to mollify her more than anything else, and by supper time she was quite endurable, although her husband approached the house cautiously.

When Josh came out to milk that evening, Shorty stole out to see him.

"I'm off, Josh," he said.

"Off! Off your nut, I guess. What's de matter?"

Shorty told him all about the churning racket, and then avowed his intention of leaving the place for good.

"Don't blame you much, Shorty; but where am yer gwine?" he asked.

"I don't know. Don't care a rap. She'll make it hot for me if I stay, so I's goin'. I'll find some place, you bet."

"Got any money?"

"Money! Never had but five cents in my life. But I don't want any money."

"Ah! you'll find it right smart handy ter hab in yer clos', honey."

"Of course. But don't say a word 'bout it, will yer, Josh?"

"Co'se not. But yer better not start off ter-night, chile. It's dark, an' you don't know nuffin' 'bout de roads. Sleep in de barn 'til break ob day, an' den go it."

"All right, I'll do it. Come out an' see me after supper, will you?"

"Co'se I will," and Josh was as good as his word. Not only that, but he brought him five dollars, and told him which way to go to reach New York City, a point to which Shorty had expressed his intention of going.

The next morning at daybreak he got up out of his soft bed of hay, and filling his handkerchief with eggs, which he knew very well where to find, he stole out of the barn, down upon the turnpike, and headed south towards the great city.

CHAPTER IV.

SHORTY was now a homeless wanderer, a little tramp, in fact.

He was greatly changed, of course, from what he was when we first knew him; but still he was not large.

He was heavy and thick, but short and duck-legged.

But he had a stout heart and a fearless one. He knew that a great world lay before him, and stranger though he was to it, he yet believed that it had good things in store for him.

At all events, he felt much better while plodding along on the dusty turnpike than he would under the same roof with Mrs. Bitts.

He trudged along for an hour or more, and finally the rumbling of a wagon in the road behind him attracted his attention.

His first thought was that Mr. Bitts was after him, and so he dodged behind some bushes to wait until after he had gone by.

But as the wagon approached he saw that the driver was a stranger, and so he resolved to ask for a ride.

He stepped out into the road, and as the farmer drove up, he stopped his old horse and took a look at our comical little hero.

"Wal, I vum! who be you, anyhow?"

Shorty looked up at the man and laughed in his face, for he was almost as comical as he was himself; being quite an old man, slouchily dressed in cheap homespun, and under a hat that might have belonged to his grandfather.

"Who are you?" he asked, again.

"I'm Shorty."

"Oh, you be, be you? Wal, I vum, you are right-ly named. What's your other name?"

"Arn't got any other."

"Got no other? Wal, I vum! Where'd you come from?"

"Give it up."

"What! Don't know where you come from?"

"I arn't very certain about it."

"But you certainly must have come from somewhere," replied the farmer.

"Wal, I come from Mr. Bitts' house."

"What you been doing there—chores?"

"Yes."

"Wal, where are you going to?"

"Anywhere."

"What for?"

"To get rid of Marm Bitts."

"Buse you?"

"You bet."

"Send you adrift?"

"No, I skipped."

"Oh, you did, hey? Kinder got up and got."

"You bet I did."

"And you don't know or care where you are go-
ing now?"

"Not much. Guess I'll go to New York, if you'll give me a ride."

"Oh, that's all right. Jump in."

Shorty was not long in obeying orders, and greatly surprised the old man by his agility.

"Better not go to New York. It's a dreadful bad place, I'm told," said he, as Shorty got up and took a seat beside him, and the old horse was again clucked and jerked into motion.

"Wal, that's all the better," replied Shorty.

"Ho—ho! Then you like general cussedness, do you?"

"You bet."

"Wal, I vum!" exclaimed the old man, once more looking Shorty over from head to foot.

Shorty looked up in his face, and winked in such a comical way that the old fellow laughed in spite of himself.

Shorty gave him a complete history of himself, as far back as he could remember, all of which interested the old farmer very much indeed.

"Wal, I vum!"

"What yer want ter 'vum' for?" he asked, as the old fellow gave vent once more to his favorite expression.

"What? Oh, that's what I allus say since I jined the church, 'cos I don't swear. See?"

"Yes, that's meetin'-house swarin'?"

"Wal, I 'spect so. But, I say, you, I want a boy."

"No!"

"Yes, I want one, and if you've a mind to go with me, I'll give you a good home and send you to school this winter."

"I wonder if it's good fun to go to school?"

"Fun! Wal, yes. Want learning, don't you?"

"What for?"

"You want to know how to read and write, don't you? Of course you do."

"I don't know as I do, but if you say so, it's all right."

"But will you go and live with me?"

"Where do you live?"

"'Bout three miles ahead."

"Ahead of what?"

"Ahead of where we are now."

"Nice place?"

"Of course."

"No boss woman around?"

"No, I'm boss."

"And old Marm Bitts can't reach me?"

"No."

"Then I don't mind if I try yer a little while."

"Good enough. Get up, Dolly," he added, to his old nag, that had almost fallen asleep while the old man was so much interested in Shorty.

A ride of an hour or so brought them to an ordinary farm-house, and driving into the yard and up to the barn, Shorty was shown the barn part of his new home.

At first glance it seemed to be very much like the one he had just left, but he soon found it to be much superior, for the farmer's wife was quite as jolly as he was himself, and she took a liking to Shorty right away, and so he found himself all right in this respect.

The names of these people were Mr. and Mrs. Hand, and they had three very pretty, but very stuck up, daughters about beau age, and they took but little stock in Shorty; however, he took but little in them, and odds were even.

Shorty was soon very much at home, and fell to doing the chores very cheerfully; but when Sunday came he was slicked up and made to go to church, although very much against his will.

He soon became the talk of the town, and a general favorite also, for he could sing and dance, and tell all the funny stories he had ever heard; and the young fellows used to get him down to the store, evenings, and have lots of fun with him in one way and another.

But still the name of Shorty clung to him, and nobody ever thought of calling him anything else, which suited him just as well as though he had a dozen names.

He found considerable fun in playing tricks on the three young fellows who came every Sunday night to court the farmer's daughters, and yet his chief fun was in going to school.

He learned quickly whenever he was made to study his lessons, but the only object he saw in going to school was the fun he had.

But it was sorry fun for him once in awhile, for the old school-master occasionally caught him at his mischief, and worked away at the seat of his trousers with a ruler, until Shorty preferred standing to sitting.

And this old school-master was a character, also, and must be described. He was about fifty years of age, tall, skinny, strong, odd as a cat's tail, and on account of wearing colored glasses, the scholars could never tell which way he was looking, and some of them firmly believed that he could see through the back of his head.

School-master Brown believed in not sparing the rod, whether he cared a rap whether the child was spoiled or not, and he generally opened the exercises of the day by giving some luckless wight a "going over" with his ruler.

Of course Shorty came in for his share of this amusement, although there was no such thing as whaling the deviltry out of him.

The school-house was a little red affair, set up on stones at each corner, high enough to allow the boys to creep under it; and a precious lot of mischief used to be cut up under it.

Shorty concluded that he had been flogged enough for one day, and resolved to play a joke on old Brown, and at least be sure that he earned the next one he got.

So he and two other boys put their heads together to see what they could do. They finally concluded to give the old man an "Irish hoist," or in other words, a tumble.

With their minds made up, they managed to get into the school-house the next Saturday afternoon, while there was no school, of course, and with a

saw they cut the boards, on which the teacher's chair stood, almost off at each end of the little platform behind his desk.

Then they carefully filled up the saw scarfs with putty, and rubbed in some dirt in such a way as to completely hide all traces of the mischief, leaving just enough of the flooring to barely hold a man's weight.

After this was nicely arranged they returned home to await the result. They were all three of them on hand bright and early the next Monday morning, each so full that they were on a broad grin all the time, and went to their seats before school was called, something so unusual for them to do that Mr. Brown remarked it.

The old man was not in a very lovely frame of mind that morning, and the scholars came trooping in behind him, each feeling that they had got to behave first-rate that day, or stand a first-rate chance of getting bounced around without music.

"Order!" he called, and the children got into their seats as quietly and with as little noise as possible.

"Master Shorty, come here!" he called, as soon as order had been secured.

"Oh, gracious! what's this for, I wonder?" said Shorty to himself.

"Do you hear me, sir?" he called again.

"Yes, sir," and exchanging inquiring glances with the other two fellows, he waddled out into the middle of the room.

"Tom Strong, come out here," called the old man, to another of the plotters, as he took his ruler from the desk.

"Oh, Lord, we're found out!" all three of them thought.

"George Bunce, come out here," he called to the third one.

"Oh, he's dropped to it!" they all moaned.

"Hold out your hand, Shorty," he demanded, after all three of them were on the floor.

"What for?" asked Shorty.

"Hold out the hand that you stole Mr. Jones' apples with," thundered the old man.

"Oh, all right," said Shorty, only too glad to find out that their little trap had not been discovered.

He gave each one of them a good warming, and sent them back to their seats.

"I will see if people are to complain of the thieves I have in my school. You young rascals, I'll flog you within an inch of your lives if I ever hear of you stealing anything again. I saw you in your seats when I came in, looking as honest as you know how to look, but you cannot deceive me. I know you too well. Now go about your studies, and mind how you carry sail."

The old man had better have taken that advice himself, for as he finished speaking, he stepped behind his desk and sat down heavily upon his chair.

He suddenly disappeared from view, amid the crash of breaking boards, while his legs and arms went flying and sprawling about as though trying to catch hold of something to save himself.

He yelled himself, and so did the frightened, or delighted, scholars, and in an instant all was in an uproar and confusion.

Some of the children ran out of doors, and others rushed to the relief of the old man, as he had stuck in the hole in such a way that he could not move either one way or the other.

Shorty ran out and crawled under the school-house, where the fattest portion of the old man was hanging down, and taking a pin he jabbed it into him several times.

"Oh—oh! help!" he yelled, and the boys pulled away, trying to get him out.

"Pull—pull! I am being murdered here!" he whined.

Shorty gave him two or three more prods, and then returned to the room and went to work with all his might, apparently to get him out of his distressing position.

"Pull!" he yelled.

"Pull!" yelled Shorty, and after they had enjoyed the old fellow's torment as long as they cared to, they pulled him out, and he got upon his feet again.

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned.

"How did it happen?" was the general inquiry.

"The—the boards broke, I suppose. Oh, what a shock it gave me!"

"Are you hurt?" asked several.

"Not bad, I guess. Go back to your seats."

It was some time before order could be restored, during which the conspirators laughed themselves almost blind.

It was a comical sight to see the old man standing there rubbing the spot where Shorty had pinned him, and looking into the ugly hole out of which he had been pulled.

In fact, it was so comical that Shorty could not restrain his feelings, and laughed loudly and heartily.

"What are you laughing at, sir?" screamed the teacher, white with rage.

"Nothing, sir."

"How dare you laugh, sir?"

"I—I couldn't help it, sir."

"Very well; come out here, and I will show you that I can't help giving you a warming on account of it. Come out."

"All right," thought Shorty; "I guess he owes me one, and I can afford it."

To tell the truth, Shorty did catch a good whaling, but not a blow hurt. In fact, he was laughing all the while he was catching it.

Having vented his spite, he turned to examine the

damage, and ascertain the cause of it. In this way he soon learned that the boards had been sawed almost off, and he knew that a trick had been played upon him, but whether by some of the scholars or an outsider, he could not tell.

"I'll watch and wait," he said to himself. "But woe to the jokers if I find them out! Oh—oh, how I do smart! Guess I must have run a splinter into me," and still rubbing, he went on with the regular exercises of the day.

It seemed as though noon would never come to Shorty and his friends, but when it did come, they ran out and laughed to their hearts' content.

"I'll bet that Shorty had a hand in that job," was what almost everybody said when the news of the tumble became known, and although he and his friends kept their secret well, it was generally believed that he was at the bottom of the laughable affair.

But the seat of his pantaloons was what had made the muss.

Mr. Brown sneezed as though he would blow the top of his head off, and then the scholars took it up, and finally there was one of the noisiest and liveliest old sneezing schools that was ever seen or heard.

"Boys—ah—te—chew! Boys, will you—ah—te—chew!" he said, trying to restore order.

"Yes, we will—ah—te—chew!" was the reply. "Girls, behave yourselves, or—ah—te—chew! Silence, I say, or—ah—te—chew!"

And then they all laughed and sneezed by turns, and such a lot of fun as it caused none of them had ever seen before.

But what it was that was flying in the air and had set them all to sneezing, Mr. Brown could not tell.

He never suspected Shorty, strange as it may

One of them, that belonging to Jones, he fixed in this way: He unhitched the harness in such a way that the horse would walk right out of the shafts when he was started up.

As for Benson's horse, he took the saddle off, and taking out the other fellow's horse that was hitched to the buggy, he exchanged them, putting the saddle on the buggy horse and the saddle horse he harnessed into the buggy, at the same time taking off the nuts of the hind wheels.

When this was all arranged to suit him, he went up stairs to his own room, where he undressed, so as to appear perfectly innocent, and waited for events to transpire.

All three of the spoony lovers were in the parlor with the lamp turned down very low, and when the clock struck one they concluded that it was about time to go.

After many hugs and kisses and reluctant good



Going at the tooth-washer, head first, like a billy-goat, he struck him in the bread-basket and knocked him over on top of his stand.

Mr. Brown heard this general opinion, and yet he said nothing about it, hoping that he would sometime be able to get at the truth of the matter, although it must be acknowledged that whenever he had occasion to flog Shorty, he put the blows on a trifle harder than he would have done had he known him to be innocent of the joke.

But Shorty made trouble for himself and the whole school in attempting to play a trick on the school-master one day soon after this.

Mr. Brown had lately adopted a new way of flogging Shorty and the larger boys, and instead of punishing them on the hand with a ruler, he made them lay over a stool, and then carefully raising their coat-tails, he would give it to them with a withe until they got all they wanted.

Shorty had been treated to this new style of amusement three or four times, and at length began to think there was little or no fun in it. So he thought he would make the old man sick.

He was quite handy with the needle, and one day he went into the barn and sewed a piece of cloth into the seat of his trousers on the inside, and between that and the outside he placed about an ounce of red pepper.

He did not have to wait longer than usual for the old man to go for him, and on account of some mischief or other he was laid over the stool, and with a hearty zeal the schoolmaster went for him with his stick.

He went to give his pants their usual morning dusting.

He did dust them. He dusted the red pepper out and got it into his nose.

He sneezed; he coughed; he rubbed his eyes, and finally abandoned the amusement, and allowed Shorty to go to his seat

seem, but thought that some of the others had scattered snuff or something of the kind on the floor, and that it had got stirred up by walking.

But the next day he went for Shorty the same way, and again that dusting set him and the whole school to coughing and sneezing violently, and came nearly breaking up the school for the day.

Then he became convinced that Shorty was the culprit, and from that time forward watched him carefully, taking care to use his ferrule on his hand whenever he got him up a little picnic in the whaling line.

One Sunday evening Shorty turned his attention to the three young men who came to court the three young ladies, the Misses Hand. He had often noticed how spoony they all were, and made up his mind to have a little sport with them.

Their overcoats and hats hung in the entry, and the first thing he did was to turn the coats all wrong side out and hang them back again where they were, after which he exchanged the things he found in the pockets.

Young Jones had a pair of lilac-colored gloves, and Benson had a pair of yellow ones. He took one of each and exchanged them so that Jones would have a lilac and a yellow glove, as would Benson.

Then he took the lining out of Munson's hat and exchanged it for that in Jones', and as there was considerable difference in the sizes of their heads, he concluded there might possibly be a little sport come out of it.

Then he proceeded to fasten a string across the door about six inches from the floor. He chuckled as he thought how they would tumble over it.

The next thing was to fix their teams, for two of them had come in buggies and the third one on horseback

nights, they all started for the entry, each one with his arm around the waist of his "mash."

Jones was the first one to open the door. Just as he was going out he stopped to see if his girl's lips tasted as they did a moment before, and the result was that they both tripped over the cord that Shorty had stretched across the door, and tumbled over into the entry.

Of course the girl screamed. Who ever knew anything to happen to a girl that she did not scream? But her lover screamed too, and when Benson and his girl ran to assist them to get up, they also tripped over the cord and tumbled on top of them.

The other chap ran to the rescue, but happening to step upon the cord, he broke it down, and though he landed on top of the others, he removed the cause of the trouble, and they all scrambled to their feet, without knowing what had caused the mischief.

Then they had to kiss some more, and to ask each other if either was hurt; if "its dear moutsey poutsey," or "loveey dovey" had put any bones out of joint.

Jones remembered his lilac gloves, and thought he would overwhelm his darling by putting them on in the presence of them all.

He proceeded to do so, and when they were on it can readily be understood how they looked.

In the meantime, they had all put on their coats, but the light in the hall was so dim that they did not discover the trick, their hands being too much employed with their girls to discover what was wrong with their pockets.

"This isn't my hat," said Benson.

"And this isn't mine, though I would have sworn to the lining."

"All right; change off," and so this little difficulty was gotten over with, and at length they all

took a good-night taste and started for their teams, hitched only a few rods away under a tree.

Jones was the first to spring in. He leaped upon his seat, and taking up the reins, chirruped to his horse, suggestive of going home; the horse was perfectly willing, and started.

She not only started, but actually went—went right out of the shafts, dragging Jones, who held on to the reins, right over the dash-board on to the ground.

"Whoa—whoa!" he shouted, and then busied himself by picking himself up out of the dirt, and trying to find out what had happened.

A bloody nose had happened him, and then the others got around and helped him to get his horse back into the buggy and hitch the harness.

Who could have played such a trick? That was the conundrum; and it was finally concluded that it must have been Tom White, his rival for the smiles of Simphonina Hand.

With strong resolutions to put a head on the afore-said rival, they all got in, and another move was made. They called out good night to their girls for about the fiftieth time, and started down the road toward home.

But they had only gone a few rods before the hind wheel of Benson's buggy came off, and down he went, with a whack that knocked a year's growth out of him.

More trickery. Who could have done this?

But they finally settled it among themselves that it must have been another rival by the name of Williams, and once more did all three of them swear to see that Williams received a punched head.

It took nearly an hour to find the nuts and get under headway again; but even then there was trouble. Benson's horse wanted to go to Munson's house, and Munson's nag made a great fuss because he could not go to Benson's barn.

Shorty laughed himself into a colic while all this was going on.

The next day the lovers found how they had been imposed upon regarding their hats, coats, gloves and horses, and not once suspecting Shorty, they resolved to punish those audacious rivals of theirs, and they did so, although a lawsuit grew out of it, which did not terminate for several years.

And so Shorty passed a whole year at this place, having lots of fun both at school and at home, and finally he began to get uneasy, and once more resolved to go and try his fortune in the great city.

CHAPTER V.

SHORTY did not leave Mr. Hand's because he disliked the place exactly, for he had been treated well there, and had lots of fun.

But he got uneasy, and made up his mind to go to New York.

So one fine morning, he packed his few earthly trinkets into a bundle, placed it upon a stick, strung it over his shoulder, and started again on foot to see the sights and wonders of the big city.

He had a roving disposition, anyway, and as he grew older it became more active, until he wanted to be on the go continually.

And as he grew older he grew no taller, but filled out and became chunked.

But he did grow a trifle handsomer, for his body grew faster than his head did, or, in other words, caught up with his head, and made him a trifle better proportioned.

At this time he was not a bad-looking fellow, although his short, duck legs, and not being more than three feet high, made him a remarkable personage wherever he went.

As before stated, he could dance a jig and sing a very good song, and after having attended one or two circuses and other shows that had come into his neighborhood, he had been seized with a desire to do something in that line, and had practiced at several feats that he had seen done until he was almost an expert, being exceedingly strong and active.

Well, he pegged along towards Brooklyn, humming a merry tune, and with a heart that beat high with hope and satisfaction.

He was once more adrift, and was ready for anything that might turn up in his way.

He trudged slowly along, for he could not walk fast with his little duck legs, and didn't have money enough to ride, and so he resolved to watch for a ride.

He got a few short ones during the first day, and that night he spent all the money he had to pay for a supper and lodgings.

As for grub, he managed to scoop that in at various places along the route, for he loved fruit and watermelons, and his stomach would not go back on any stray hen or chicken that he might come across.

About noon the next day he reached the Jamacia turnpike gate, to go through which each foot passenger had to pay three cents.

Now, Shorty had only one cent to his name, and so he thought he would try and "chin" his way through the gate.

So he marched boldly up for the purpose of buzzing the tollkeeper; but he saw no one about.

The fact was, the old chap who took the tolls was seated on a low chair that was just high enough for him to see over the half-door and detect anybody who might approach.

But Shorty wasn't tall enough to be seen from where the old man sat, and had he known this fact he might have stolen through without trouble, in-

stead of which he kept looking around to find out if anyone was in sight.

Not seeing any person, he concluded that the gatekeeper had gone somewhere for the time being, and so he started to bounce through.

But the old chap heard a step, and having been cheated many times before, suspected that some one was trying to run the blockade, and leaping to his feet he reached the door just as Shorty was passing.

Making a dive for him he caught him by his hat and hair and lifted him right off his feet, holding him up a moment at arm's length.

"Oh—oh! wee!" howled Shorty, kicking like a newly-caught lobster.

"Here, you little rascal, what the devil are you trying to do?" demanded the burly gate-keeper.

"Oh, ah, trying to get away."

"You are trying to get through without paying, you little vagabond."

"Let me down; you pull my hair!"

"Come down with three cents, or I'll shake you out of your socks."

"Oh—oh! I arn't got no three cents. Let me go!"

"Yes, but you go back."

"Yes—yes; oh, yes, anywhere."

"All right; now waltz. Git!" said he, dropping him to his feet.

Shorty ran back a few feet and stood a moment rubbing his head and looking like a picture of sore disgust.

"Clear out, or I'll set the dog on you."

"Oh, say, mister, let a poor fellow through?" he whined.

"Git!"

"Oh, say, you had three cent's worth of fun pullin' my hair."

"I'll have a dollar's worth if you attempt to steal through this toll-gate again."

"Oh, arn't you mean!"

"I mean what I say, you bet; and if I catch you trying to steal through the fields I'll set the dog after you, and give you a charge of shot to boot."

"It would cost you three cents to fire your bloody old gun; besides, you hadn't ought to charge me as much as you would a big chap."

"Clear out!" said the man, returning to his seat again.

"Great grasshoppers, how he hurt!" mused Shorty, rubbing his head some more. "What the dickens am I to do, anyway? I've got to go on some how, that's certain. Guess I'll go back here and wait 'til after dark, and then sneak through," and he walked away, rubbing his head and muttering.

He walked back for about a quarter of a mile to where a turn in the road shut him from view, and taking a seat on a rock he began to speculate what he should do.

"Bust my buttons, but this is rough on a natural curiosity," he muttered, for he had always heard people speak of him as a natural curiosity. "Ah! what is this coming?"

There was a farmer's market-wagon coming slowly up the road, and Shorty got out of sight.

"If I can only steal a ride, somehow, I can steal through the toll-gate at the same time."

As the team came slowly walking past the spot where he stood out of sight, Shorty saw that the driver was asleep, and the horses were having it all their own way and taking an easy gait towards market.

Shorty stole out as they passed along, and with some difficulty managed to climb up on top of the load of cabbages.

The driver was snoring away, making more noise than the wagon was, and the moment Shorty found himself safely up he began to look around for some means of concealment.

This was no easy task; for a strong canvas was tightly strapped down, making a complete cover for the load. But he succeeded in getting one of the straps unloosed, and then, by tossing out about a dozen of the cabbages, he made room for himself, and then crawled into the hole beneath the canvas.

"Oh, ho! *perhaps* not! Not any, oh, no! How is this for high? Now, we'll see if he gets my three cents," and he cuddled himself into his nest among the cabbage heads, very comfortably.

In a few minutes he heard somebody shout "whoa!" and knew that the voice belonged to the gate-keeper.

The horses stopped.

"Hallo, Bob, wake up!"

"Oh—oh! is that you, Mr. Pouncer?" asked the farmer's man, waking up, and rubbing his eyes.

"Yes, it's me, and I'm after your fifteen cents," replied the toll-gatherer, coming out of the toll-house.

"All right, I got asleep."

"So I see. Guess you must have set up late with your girl, last night?"

"Wal, yas, kinder late."

"Where's that nice head of cabbage you was going to bring me, all so fast?"

"Wal, now, my cabbages are all good; fust-rate, you bet."

"All right. Hand us down one."

"Kinder bothersome ter get at 'em now; spoazin' I bring you one ter-morrer?"

"Nonsense. You'll forget it as you have to-day; besides, I'm going to have corn-beef and cabbage, and I want the cabbage to go with it."

"Wal," and the farmer's man left his seat and began to walk over the load of cabbages for the purpose of getting one out.

In doing so he stepped upon Shorty's head, but

probably thinking it was only a cabbage-head, he paid no further attention to it, although Shorty knew the difference right away, and used cuss words enough to melt a ton of ice.

Finally he got a cabbage-head out of the tail end of his wagon and handed it over to the toll-gate-keeper.

"Thank you. That's a bully one. By the way, did you see a little runt as you came along towards the gate?"

"Runt?"

"Yes, a comical dwarf of a fellow."

"No, I was asleep."

"Oh, yes, I forgot. Well, he was one of the cheekiest and funniest little devils that I ever saw in my life, and I caught him just as he was sneaking through the gate."

"What did you do with him?"

"I fired him back; but I guess he'll try it again by-and-by, and so I have got a gun loaded with rock salt for him."

"Going to pickle him, hey?" said the chap mounting to his seat.

"You bet."

"Oh, you will, hey?" thought Shorty.

The farmer drove away, and Shorty was all right again.

As for that watchful gate-keeper, he felt so sure that Shorty would again attempt to run through, that he kept the gun standing ready until it was quite dark, when, thinking he saw Shorty stealing along through behind the bushes that grew by the side of the road, he stole cautiously out, and had the extreme satisfaction of shooting his own hog, that was rooting around in quest of some extra grub.

Such a squealing as that porker set up when he found himself salted before being killed would have delighted Shorty's heart, could he have heard it, as every one else did who lived within a mile of the place.

But it served the heartless fellow right, for he was just cruel enough to have fired the charge into Shorty, had it chanced to be him instead of the poor hog.

Well, Shorty was all right, although it was not the most comfortable place in the world to ride in, but beggars mustn't be choosers, he thought, and much less those who help themselves without asking leave.

Presently the wagon reached the paved streets of Brooklyn, and such a rattling as it made Shorty had never heard before.

He had never seen a paved street, it must be remembered, and even now he could see nothing, but felt it all.

Rattle, rumble, bumble went the wagon over the stones, shaking poor Shorty like a bean in a dry pod, and he could not account for the gradually increasing noise and hurrah that he heard, unless he had got into the city.

He would have given all his old clothes to have looked out once and got a sight of his surroundings.

But it was a hard thing to do, and so he did his best to control his curiosity until the wagon should stop at the market.

Presently it reached the ferry, and stopped in line to await its chance of getting over when the next boat came in.

"I wonder if this is the market?" he asked himself, after waiting a few minutes to see if the driver was going to move along.

Thinking that perhaps it might be, and that in case it was it would be dangerous for him to remain in his place of concealment until a purchaser came and the load was uncovered, he moved cautiously around and worked his head out from under the canvas.

Just as it was poked out, a half-drunken man came along and spied it.

He started back and grasped an awning post for support.

"By gosh! Wasser zat?" he muttered to himself, but while he was in this confused state of mind the driver started up a rod or so, and another wagon of a very similar kind, and loaded with cabbages also, moved up and took its place.

"Won'er wasser matter wis me anyhow?" asked the tipsy fellow; "won'er five got 'em? I say, ole man, washer got there?" he called to the driver.

"Cabbages," was the short reply.

"Cabbages. Be they 'live?'"

"No, but I know one that is."

"Do, hey?" and the fellow tried to straighten up.

"Yes, and it is pretty drunk too," said the man, laughing.

"Do, hey? hic."

"A sort of pickled cabbage," said the farmer, starting along to take the place of the team ahead of him to pay his ferriage.

"Do, hey? Here, come back here, Bess yer five dollar one your cabbages got hair'n eyes. Go to yer devil," he added, in a loud voice.

"Move on, or I'll jerk you in," said a policeman, giving the tipsy fellow a livening touch with his club, and without loss of time he moved.

"Bess a million dollar I got 'em, got jams. Going right home an' swear off," he muttered, as he staggered away.

It is to be hoped that Shorty was the innocent means of making the fellow swear off and become a useful member of society. But of course he knew nothing of the sensation he had kicked up, any more than he knew where he was. At all events, finding that the wagon was again in motion, he concluded that he had not yet arrived at the market, and so went out of sight again.

The wagon drove down the float and upon the ferry boat, making a peculiar rumbling that caused Shorty to feel very uncomfortable; where the blazes he was being taken to he could not imagine. If this was the great city, he didn't like the way he was being introduced to it.

And now new sounds met his ears—the puffing of tug boats, the sharp, warning whistle from the many steamboats that are darting through the waters of the East river, these, and many more, nearly drove him crazy in his confinement.

Then the ferryboat gave a prolonged whistle that made every hair on his head stand up, and he felt to see if the hair on the other heads of the load were standing.

Then the bell rang; the machinery began to work, and the huge paddle-wheels to revolve and tear through the water.

"I know the devil has got me, sure," said he,

where he was and what was going on, he would have felt better, and when the boat gave her final bump, and the chains and windlass wheels began to rattle in fastening the boat, it proved too much for him, and again he pushed up the canvas cover and looked out.

Just then the wagon started to drive off the boat.

A panicky female happened to cast her eyes on the load, and saw Shorty's funny little mug thrust out, and she gave a scream that startled everybody on board.

There was a rush of passengers, and great excitement was kicked up in three shakes of a goat's tail.

Some shouted "Woman overboard!" others "Stop thief!" and still others "Fire!" and for a moment the wildest excitement prevailed.

But a policeman forced his way through the

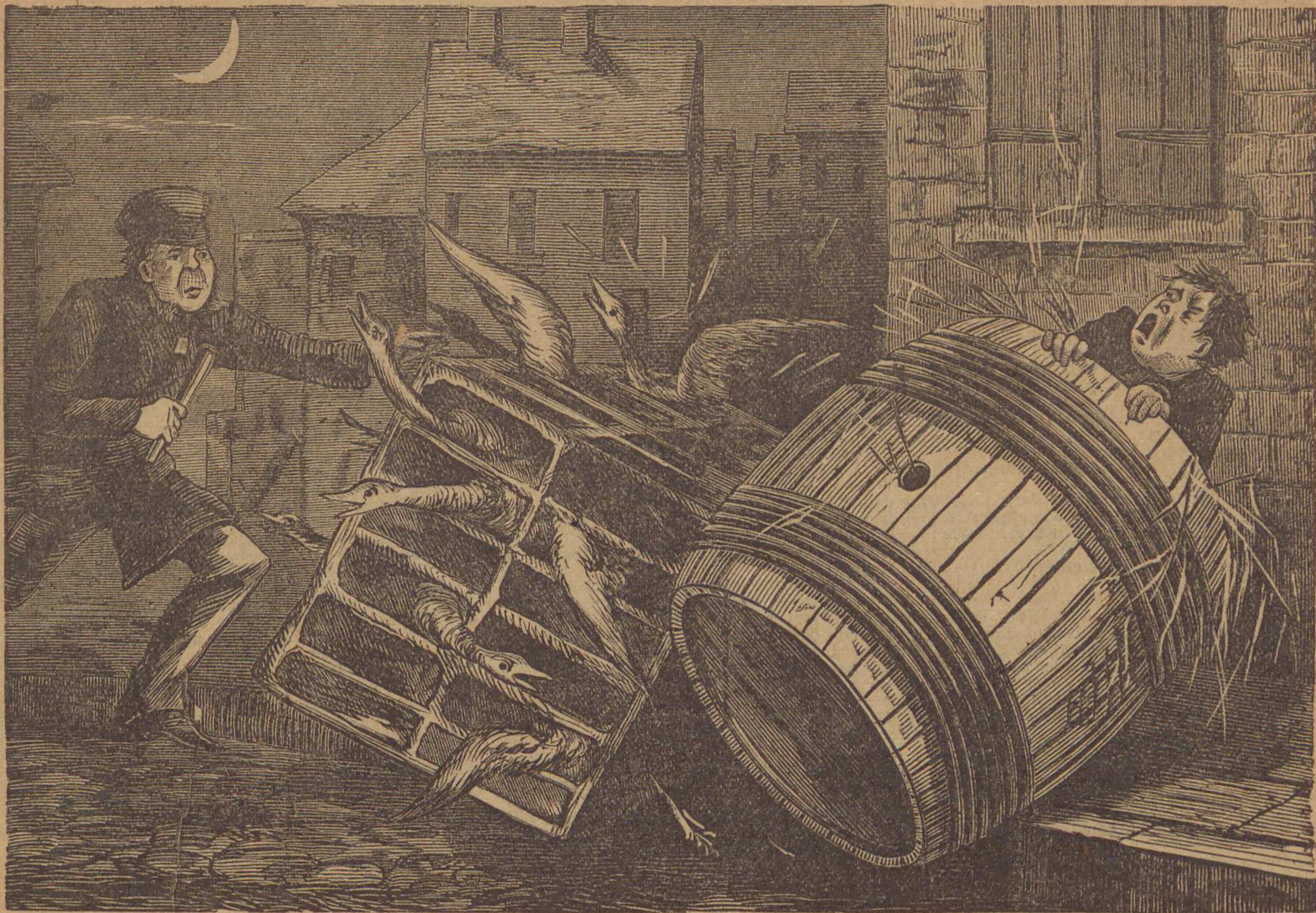
either side, and the crowd of people hurrying to and fro past the brightly-lighted store windows.

In a few moments the wagon drove down Vesey street and halted behind another that was loaded with potatoes, and which had likewise come to a stop for the night, waiting for early morning customers who came to buy.

The driver got down, and taking two nose-bags filled with oats he proceeded to feed his horses, after which he sauntered away in quest of some food for himself, or some amusement that would kill the time between that and morning.

Shorty had heard how this part of the business of marketing was conducted, and he knew that his time for escaping had arrived. So he watched his chances, and finally crawled out and jumped down upon the sidewalk.

But, oh! how cramped and stiff he was! He could hardly move. He walked around for a few



On—he went; but he finally stopped by running into a large pen standing on the sidewalk, containing a large number of geese.

and once more he poked his head out to see where he was.

But the team he was on was located near the center of the boat, and it was so dark that he could distinguish nothing beyond a horse or two belonging to other teams, and so he concluded to remain quiet for a while longer, and see what would come of it all.

Just then somebody approached, and he drew his head out of sight.

That somebody was a thief with a market basket; one of those sneaks who follow market wagons for what they can steal.

He stopped by the side of this wagon, seeing that the driver was dozing on his seat, and quickly discovering the loosened strap that Shorty untied when he stowed himself away, he raised the canvas for the purpose of stealing whatever he could get his hands upon.

The first thing he got his hand on was our friend Shorty, and the next instant Shorty got his hand on that fellow's nose, for darting out his hard, little fist with the rapidity of lightning, he hit the thief a stinger upon the snoot, and sent him bang up against the side of the boat.

Not a word was spoken, but uttering a smothered curse, that thief made tracks for the stern of the boat, where he busied himself, until it arrived at New York, with a bleeding nose.

"I wonder who that fellow was, anyhow?" mused Shorty. "Wonder if he was the driver? Perhaps he's gone for a constable to have me taken up. Wonder if I hadn't better waltz out of this? Ah! what is that?" he added, as the boat bumped against the side of her slip on the New York side.

These strange bumps and events were fast making him wild.

Could he have seen out and got a better idea of

crowd, and reached the half-fainting woman who had uttered the alarm.

"What is the trouble, madam?"

"Oh—oh!" was all she could say.

"Oh, where? Speak!" said he, sharply, at the same time motioning the crowd to keep back.

"A man!" she gasped.

"What man? Where is he? What did he do to you?"

"I—I see him," said she.

"The devil you did!"

"What did he do?" asked a passenger.

"He—he stuck his head out—"

"Oh, nonsense! Move on there!" yelled the officer, turning to the anxious crowd. "Now, what has happened to you, madam?"

"Oh, I was so frightened."

"At what?"

"A man's head."

"Bah! What of the man's head?"

"He stuck it out," said she, and the crowd laughed and cheered.

"Out of where?" demanded the officer.

"Out of a market-wagon."

"Oh, nonsense! Go along about your business, and don't get a crowd here because you saw a man's head. What is the matter with you?"

"I—I am very nervous."

The crowd laughed and moved out of the ferry-house, while the crest-fallen female was glad to get anywhere out of sight.

By this time, the wagon in which Shorty was a stowaway had started up Fulton street, and was headed for Washington Market.

Shorty now began to understand that he was in New York, and from his peep-hole he could see the thousands of gaslights which lined the street on

moments, and finally felt that he was himself again.

But how very strange everything was. How the lights flashed and glared. What tall buildings, and how close together they were. And what a roar and racket. He could scarcely hear himself think.

He gazed around him in utter bewilderment, and finally ventured a little way further down towards the market. But he hardly knew what he was doing, as, of course, he knew nothing of where he was going.

As he was gazing around, the flare of a big torch attracted his eye, and he walked slowly towards it.

It was the torch of a peddler of some kind of tooth-wash.

The fellow had a crowd around him, and was expatiating upon the wonderful merits of this wonderful article.

Shorty got into the crowd.

"Now, then, my friends," said the peddler, "I wish you to understand that I am not obliged to sell this wonderful discovery in this way. I am rich, but my good heart will not allow me to enjoy my riches while my fellow-men are going around with tartar on their teeth, and unconsciously fitting themselves for the barbarities of the dentist's chair. Now, if some person will step this way, I will clean his teeth for nothing, just to show what this article will do. Come right here, sonny," said he, espousing Shorty in the crowd.

Hardly knowing what he was wanted for, Shorty approached the operator.

Seizing him around the neck, and pulling his mouth open, he began to rub his teeth with his preparation.

Shorty wasn't a bit pleased with the treatment. He would much rather have had something to put

between his teeth than to have them cleaned, and so before the fellow was aware of it, he caught his finger between his teeth and bit it smartly.

"Hold on, you rascal! Let go!" yelled the dentist. "Let go!"

The crowd laughed and cheered, whereat the fellow hit Shorty a slap in the face that caused him to let go his hold.

But quick as a flash he stepped back a few feet, and going at the tooth-washer head first, like a billy-goat, he struck him in the bread-basket, and knocked him over on top of his stand, sending them both crashing upon the sidewalk.

Hastily catching up his bundle, he darted away without saying a word. But the fallen tooth-cleaner yelled lustily for the police, and one came running around the corner of Church street.

"Arrest that boy over there!" cried the peddler, and the officer started in pursuit.

Shorty didn't exactly understand this any more than he understood what the peddler wanted to do with him; but he knew that the movement meant him no good; so he ran down Vesey street as hard as he could go.

But, of course, the officer could run faster than Shorty's little duck legs could carry him, and finding that he was about to be captured, he turned suddenly, and running directly towards the officer, he stooped a little, and darted between his legs, like a frightened pig, upsetting the policeman and sending him down with a thud.

Quickly recovering himself, he ran towards some empty casks that stood on the sidewalk, and before the officer had time to get his breath, that had been knocked out of him, Shorty had vanished from sight.

By this time the crowd had come up, but not a soul of it knew where Shorty had gone to, and after looking around for some time, the officer went to the station-house for repairs, and the peddler gathered up the wreck of his table and the wonderful tooth wash, and sadly meandered back to his boarding-house, a sorer and a wiser man than he had left it.

As for the crowd, every member of it seemed to have a great interest in Shorty.

They had only obtained a glimpse of him, but he was such a comical oddity that they all wanted to see him again.

They all agreed that he had served the peddler right, and had he not been afraid to come from his hiding-place, he would have found many friends then and there.

Rather a lively introduction to the great city.

CHAPTER VI.

YES, rather a lively introduction to New York. Shorty thought it was, as he lay crouched down in the straw in the bottom of the cask that stood on the Vesey street sidewalk, hiding from the policeman whom he had tumbled over.

Here he had not been in the city half an hour, and yet circumstances had made him a fugitive from the police.

What would come of it?

While he lay there he heard the clock on St. Paul's chime the hour of ten.

He was dreadfully hungry, and knew not which way to turn.

But one thing was certain, he could not stay there long.

Finally he threw off the straw which covered him, and rising to his feet, he cautiously peeped over the top of the cask.

He saw no unusual excitement.

There were fewer people passing along the street, fewer lights burning, but he saw nothing which indicated he was being watched.

So he leaped over the top of his prison, and once more stood upon the sidewalk.

"Now for some grub," he muttered; "but how am I going to get it? I haven't a red, and don't know New York a cent's worth. This must be the market down here," he said, looking down Vesey street. "Wonder if I can't find something ter chaw on around there. I'll try."

Saying which, he started towards it.

As he passed along people noticed what a little duck-legged runt he was, and commented on it.

Some of them even called after him.

"Hallo, Shorty," said a footblack that passed him.

"By Jinks, there's a chap who knows me! Wonder who he is? I say, hallo!" he called.

"Come here, Shorty, an' lemme black yer eye!" the boy called again.

"Hold on!" called Shorty, starting after him for the purpose of finding out who he was.

Now, of course the chap didn't know him at all; he only called him "Shorty" for fun, and happened to get it right.

But the moment he saw him coming after him he took to his heels and ran like old scratch.

"Wonder who the bother he is, anyway?" mused Shorty, as he turned towards the market again.

"Hallo, Shorty!" called another boy from the opposite side of the street, a moment afterwards.

Shorty stopped and looked.

"Somebody else knows me," he muttered. But the chap passed along without even looking around again.

"Devilish funny," he muttered, as he continued along down the street.

The market was of course closed for the night, but there were several stalls along the sidewalk yet doing business by flaring torch lights.

He gazed wistfully at the tempting display of fruit, and still wandered on.

Presently he came to a cake and coffee stand.

"I wonder if they trust here?" he mused. "And I wonder if they bounce a feller pretty hard if he eats and wants to step out without paying?"

"Golly, I think I'd rather have a kicking with a full belly than a caved in belly and no kicking."

"Hallo, Shorty!" said one of the waiters, who had espied him looking wistfully in at the door.

"Do you know me? I don't know you," said he.

"Well, who said I did know you?"

"Didn't you call me Shorty?"

"Yes, what of it?"

"Well, dat's my name."

"Oh, it is, hey? That's funny, and by the by, you are a sort of a funny little cuss anyway. Where do you come from?"

"Down on Long Island."

"Oh, you did, hey? And are you the sort of chaps they raise down there?"

"Well, they only raised me so much."

"Didn't take much time to do that," said the waiter, turning away to wait on a customer.

"I guess he can't kick very hard," mused Shorty. "Guess I'll fill up here," saying which he entered the shop, and took a seat at one of the tables.

He called for what he wanted, and was only a short time in getting on the outside of two cups of coffee and two plates of butter cakes.

"Anything else, Shorty?" asked the waiter.

"Yes, a piece of mince pie," said he, and he got away with it nearly as quick as a turkey would get away with a grasshopper.

He glanced at the check the waiter had placed on the table.

It was thirty-five cents, a sum that overwhelmed him.

He took it up to the bar.

"Want thirty-five cents worth of fun?" he asked, looking at the waiter in a half comical way.

"Want what?"

"Thirty-five cents worth of fun."

"Yes."

"Think you can get it out of me?"

The waiter stood back and took a look at him.

"Haven't you got any money?"

"Not a red."

"You haven't? Then what made you come in here for grub?" he asked, savagely.

"Because I was hungry."

"You little runt of a sucker!"

"And I thought I'd rather have you kick me than a bigger chap."

"I ought to throw you clear across the street."

"But that'd be too much fun for the money, wouldn't it?" he asked, good-naturedly.

"It might be too much for you, but I don't think it would be more than I could stand."

"All right, boss, if you think I deserve it, go ahead. I wouldn't ha' come in only I was awful hungry."

"Well, get out and see that you don't come nosing around here again, or I will set a policeman on you," he said, turning away.

"I'll see yer when I get some money!"

"All right, though you will have grown so much by that time that I shall not know you."

With a full belly and an unkicked body, Shorty started out feeling first-rate.

"Oh, I guess not!" he said to himself, as he started toward Broadway. "Why, I wouldn't object to boarding this way. I allus thought that New York was a nice place."

Reaching Broadway he happened to think about lodging. How could he manage that?

This puzzled him somewhat; but all at once he happened to think about the crockery barrel half-filled with straw, into which he had leaped and hidden when the officer was after him.

"That's my hotel!" he exclaimed, turning quickly back into Vesey street.

Without loss of time he made his way back again to the friendly cask, into which he popped like an India-rubber doll.

"I guess I won't wake up the clerk, or stop to put down my name," he said, nestling down into the straw.

After he had been asleep for a few hours he was rudely awakened.

A thief had stolen the barrel, and was rolling it down towards the dock, while poor Shorty was being flopped over and over in the most rude manner imaginable.

"Ho—ho! help!" he shouted, and the way that thief did get up and git out of that was a caution.

But he never thought about Shorty, although he was thinking about himself, for the thief had just got the cask on the down grade of the street, as Shorty yelled, and leaving it as it was rolling, it didn't stop, but kept right on, going faster and faster, and Shorty was howling louder and louder.

Such a shaking up no poor devil ever got before.

On—he went; but he finally stopped by running into a large pen standing on the sidewalk, containing a large number of geese, knocking it over and raising such a squalling among the frightened birds as awoke the neighborhood.

Shorty crawled out of the ruins and tried to think where he was and what had happened, but before he could do anything but rub the dirt out of his eyes, he was pounced upon by a policeman who had been aroused from a comfortable nap, just around the corner.

He wasn't a particle afraid of Shorty, the policeman wasn't; but drawing his club, he made a dive

for him, caught him by the collar of his jacket, and lifted him up clear off the ground.

"Come along, you big rascal," he said, starting off towards the station-house, with his kicking and astonished prisoner.

"Lemme be!" shouted Shorty.

"Will I? Will I allow yez ter escape me grasp! Not much, begob. Come along!"

Poor Shorty had no other alternative than to keep as quiet as he could and go along, for the moment he offered any resistance, the burly officer lifted him up clear off the ground, and made him skip, whether or no.

Reaching the station-house, he was instantly dragged before Sergeant Polly, who was the officer on duty behind the desk.

"What do you want, O'Brine?" he asked, as the officer stood up before the desk.

"I have a prisoner, sur."

"Well, why don't you bring him in?" asked the sergeant, who could not see Shorty.

"I have him, sur."

"Where is he?"

"Here, sur."

The sergeant arose and looked over the high desk down at Shorty.

"Well, I'll be blamed! Where did you get him, officer?"

"Down on Vesey street, by the market."

"What was he doing?"

"Sure, he's a great conspirator, so he is," said the officer.

"A what? Conspirator? What could that little duffer conspire about?"

"Faith, he conspired about a goose-pen."

"What about it?"

"Ter oust it up and stale from it, sur."

"Is that so, Shorty?" asked the sergeant.

"Hang me if I know. Them big words lick thunder out of me," replied Shorty; whereat Sergeant Polly laughed heartily.

But Officer O'Brine wouldn't laugh for anything.

To his thinking, it was altogether too serious a case for levity.

"Well, how was it, anyway?"

"I give it up, boss."

"Faith, he's guilty, an' hasn't a word ter say forinst ye. I found him crawling out of the ruins of the goose-pen that stands on Crowley's corner, wid ther geese a squealin' like so many stuck pigs."

"Was the pen broken open?"

"No; it was only tipped over, sur."

"Tipped over? What the dickens did he want to tip a goose-pen over for?"

"Ter smash it, I think, sur."

"What about this, Shorty?"

"Do you know me, boss?" asked Shorty, looking up at the sergeant, innocently.

"No; what is your name?"

"Why, you just called me by name."

"Shorty—is that your name?"

"You bet."

Sergeant Polly was a merry-hearted man, and he laughed loudly as he looked again at the comical little prisoner.

"Where do you live?"

"Anywhere, boss; I was living in a crockery cask the last time I knew anything about myself."

"What do you mean?"

"Wal, yer see I hooked a ride in from Long Island on a farmer's wagon, an' I didn't have no place ter sleep. See? So I got into one of those casks that stand out here, an' went ter sieep. See?"

"Oh, yes, I see; but cut it short."

"All right. Wal, I don't know how long I slept, but bime by some duffer comed along an' began to roll away de cask. See?"

Both of the officers laughed at the comical situation and the comical way in which Shorty was illustrating it.

"Wal, I yelled like thunder, for I was scared half ter death. Wouldn't you be, boss?"

"Well, I might have felt a trifle uneasy."

"You bet yer would, ter find yer hotel goin' off that way."

"Hotel! ho—ho—ho!" roared the sergeant.

"Howtel, indade!" chimed the officer, laughing with his superior.

"Wal, wasn't it the only hotel I had?"

"Yes—yes, of course it was. Go ahead."

"All right. Whoever was rollin' that cask lit out when I squealed, leaving it rolling down hill like thunder. See?"

Sergeant Polly sat back into his chair and roared again.

He hadn't had so much fun in a year, and he was a great lover of it.

"Oh, be jabers, but yez are a comical thafe, ony-way," said the officer.

"I'm no thief, ole man!" said he, indignantly.

"Well, go on, and tell us about the goose-pen," said the sergeant.

"Hang me if I know much more about it, boss. I kept rolling, you know, an' the fus' thing I know'd was the old lodging house hit agin somethin' an' stopped all of a to onct like, an' then the geese began ter yell like blue blazes, an' then the old man here picked me up."

"Did you see the cask, officer?"

"To be sure I did, an' fat did the little spalpeen do but roll it up so far as ter hide himself wid while he thaved the gase."

"How is that, Shorty?"

"It ain't so. What'd I want of geese? How in thunder'd I know where I was goin' to? But I'm

much obliged to the goose-house for stopping me before going into the river."

"Well, Shorty, I guess you can finish your night's rest with us. I'll speak to the captain about you in the morning. Show him to parlor No. 12," said the sergeant, addressing the doorman.

"Everything's all right, hey?" asked Shorty.

"Oh, yes, all right, or we'll make it all right in the morning. Go to your post again," said he, turning to Officer O'Brine.

"Yes, sur," said he, saluting and going out of the room.

The doorman was taking Shorty down stairs to the cell that the sergeant had good-naturedly named "Parlor No. 12."

"Now this 's all square, boss?" he asked, turning to the officer again.

"All right, Shorty."

"No shenanegan?"

"I'll stay at the desk."

"I'm glad of it, for it has been awful lonesome here to-night, and a little club exercise will be just the thing."

"Report as soon as you reach there, and find out what it is all about."

"Yes, sir."

By this time the reserve squad had made its appearance, and the sergeant led them away to the scene of the disturbance.

It proved to be a rumpus in a sailor boarding-house.

One man had stabbed another, and an attempt had been made by others to fire the house.

After a long search he found the assassin and sent him to the station-house, while he remained behind with the other officers to hunt up the incendiaries.

This was no easy job, and it was nine o'clock the

sentence for from ten to ninety days on Blackwell's Island, his heart sank within him.

"Oh! what a bounce this is," he mused: "I wish I was out of it."

Right next to him sat an old woman, who was bewailing her sad fate.

"Och, worra—worra! ter think they'd take a dacent woman away from her family for takin' a drap or two of the cratur. Sure it's no free country at all, where a poor woman can't get drunk when she wants ter. Bad luck to the big duffer of a policeman as tuck me in. Begob, but when my ould man, Paddy Cary, gets a hould of him, he'll knock der beeswax right out of him, so he will, an' begorra, I'll help him do it."

A sudden idea entered Shorty's head.

It was a desperate one, but better than none at all.

While the old woman was bemoaning her fate,



"What's the matter, Coony?" asked Shorty, laughing at the comical figure that was before him on the floor, half white and half black.

"Honest Indian."

"Lemme go in der morning?"

"All right," and the doorman led him away.

"Well, I'll be hanged," mused the sergeant, as he entered the name of "Shorty; tramp; no home; arrested by Officer O'Brine for pushing over a goose-pen on Vesey street, at 2 o'clock A. M."

To do the sergeant justice, he felt bad at locking Shorty up in a cell, but thinking that it would be quite as good as any other bed he might find, he concluded to do so, and speak to the captain about him in the morning, and if, upon investigation, his story was found to be true, to let him go.

"And I'll be hanged if I don't think there's a fortune in the little runt. He's as smart as a steel trap and naturally comical. If he could be taught to dance and cut up on the stage he'd knock the burnt cork right out of Dan Bryant's 'Little Mac.' I think I'll gobble him up, sure."

Sergeant Polly was something of a genius in several ways.

He was one of the bravest and best officers on the force, but if he longed for anything in particular as much as he did for a clean reputation with his superiors, it was to be a manager of a theater or some show.

He sat there behind the desk, and indulged in building air castles to such an extent that he almost forgot where he was, or that he was a policeman at all.

But he was suddenly awakened by the entrance of the captain.

"Sergeant Polly, there is a row down by the Battery. Take the reserve squad and go there at once."

"All right, sir," replied the sergeant, leaping to his feet and buckling on his club belt, while the captain rang the bell for the reserve.

next morning before he succeeded in effecting the arrests and marching his prisoners in triumph to the police-station.

By this time the prisoners had been taken to the Tombs, Shorty among the rest.

But to tell the truth, the excitement and hard work he had been through had completely driven all thoughts of his prize out of his head, and it was not until the next night when he went on duty at the desk again that Sergeant Polly thought about it.

"By thunder! What has become of Shorty?" he exclaimed.

He looked for the returns, but they had either not come back from the clerk of the court, or the captain had them.

But if the sergeant had forgotten Shorty, he had not forgotten himself.

The prospect of being sent to the Island for a crime he was not guilty of was not very pleasurable.

He talked with the other prisoners as they were being taken from the station-house to the Tombs for trial and examination, and from them he got very little satisfaction.

On arriving there he looked out of the prisoners' pen and saw the big policeman who had arrested him.

He was waiting to give his testimony against him, as Shorty knew very well, and what should he do?

Presently the judge came in, and the prisoners began to be called out for examination.

Shorty watched and listened with all his eyes and ears.

He could hear what was brought against the prisoners by the officers who had arrested them; and as he heard first one and then another receive

he pulled up her cloak and got under it out of sight. She was so excited that she failed to notice it.

Presently the judge called for Mrs. Carey.

"Oh, worra—worra, that's me," she howled, and even before she was taken from the prison-pen she began to groan and tell the judge all about the injustice of her arrest.

The officer of the court came to the cage and called her to come out.

"Faith, I'll not," said she, resolutely.

"Come along!" said the officer, seizing her by the arm.

Between curses and struggles she was dragged out of the place.

Shorty clung to her skirts, and completely hidden under her water-proof cloak he walked along after her without exciting suspicion.

Just before being taken behind the railing he dropped to the floor, and was stepped on by a policeman who was helping the court officer take Mrs. Carey before the judge.

Quick as a cat he was up on his feet again and started for the door as fast as his little duck legs would carry him.

"Ho, stop him!" shouted an officer.

"Yes, it's my prisoner," said O'Brine, tumbling over a man who sat in the seat with him and making a dash for Shorty.

But Shorty knew that if he got his freedom now it required hard work.

An officer stood at the door, and he was sure to be caught if he went that way.

The greatest excitement prevailed in the court room, and the judge was rapping loudly with his gavel, and calling for order.

Shorty turned suddenly, and diving between O'Brine's legs, he threw him over flat on his back, where about a dozen officers and spectators stood or

him, and then turning quickly he darted for the door and between the legs of the other officer, tumbling him over also.

This completely blocked up the passageway, and in the confusion, Shorty skipped away like a fox chased by hounds.

It was a minute or two before the jam in the passageway could be cleared, and then O'Brine and two or three other officers started after him.

But Shorty had cleared the building, and running across Centre street, he jumped down a basement stairway and landed in a dry goods box that was filled with paper, which happened to stand right in the way.

The officers were completely off the track, but a chap who had noticed the affair undertook to show them where he had gone.

CHAPTER VII.

"He jumped down here!" yelled the chap who had observed Shorty's escape from the Tombs, as recorded in our last chapter.

"Show me where! Show me the murtherin' spalpeen!" cried Policeman O'Brine, whose prisoner he had been.

"Down that grating," said the informer, pointing to the place.

"Bejabbers, but I'll strike another blow for promotion now," muttered O'Brien, as he spat upon his hand and grasped his club more firmly.

Shorty had dropped down into a drygoods box, it will be remembered, and as it was nearly filled with old packing paper, it not only broke his fall, but afforded him the means of covering himself up out of sight.

Officer O'Brine ran down into the basement, where he found a negro whitewashing the place, and singing "Shoo Fly."

"Who's here?" demanded the officer, loudly.

"I se here, boss," replied the darkey.

"Who else?"

"Nobody as I knows on. Guess dar am somebody up stairs dar."

"Has anyone come in here just now?"

"No, only yourself, boss, as I knows on."

"Be aisy wid yer gab now, nager. Did ye see a little spalpeen of a boy lep down here just now?"

"Didn't see nobody lep down, or roll down, or get down nohow."

"Bejabbers, I think ye're a lyin' ter me, ye bloody nager!" said O'Brine, shaking his club at him.

"Fo' de Lord, Mr. Policeman, I hab a been whartwashin' here all de mornin', an' I didn't see nobody down heah at all."

"Well, begob, ye deserve ter have a clubbin' for not seein' anybody."

"Guess not, boss."

"What's that ye say, ye black devil? Will ye give lip ter an officer of the law?" and he darted towards the darkey with club uplifted.

"Look out dar!" said he, dipping his brush into the whitewash, and standing ready to defend himself with it.

The valiant officer hesitated. He had on a new uniform, and knew that if the darkey attacked him with the whitewash brush that he would probably get a coat that he wouldn't care about wearing, and so he returned to the bottom of the stairs, where, shaking his club at the whitewasher, he revenged himself by calling him all the ugly names that he could think of.

"Needn't talk dat way ter me; I don't know nuffin' 'bout what you say. I's a 'spectable man, an' I don't want nuffin' to do wid yer, nohow," said the whitewash artist.

"Oh, begob, lave me catch ye outside onct, an' be the toe-nails of Moses, I'll put a head on ye as will do ye good ter see, so I will!"

"Better go 'long 'bout yer business; got no business in heah."

It suddenly occurred to the officer that the darkey was right; and, glancing around and seeing no place in which Shorty could be hidden, he went up to the sidewalk again, where he met the informer.

"Did ye find him?" he asked.

"Find him! Begob, I'll find you, if I mistake not," said he, grabbing for him. "Come along, now!"

"Me?" asked the astonished tell-tale.

"Yes; you."

"What for?"

"I'll soon show ye. Come along!"

"I ain't done nuffin'," he whined.

"Nather have I; and begorra, if I don't do some-thing I'll get me walkin' papers."

And seizing him by the coat collar, he ran him across the street and over into the Tombs.

Taking him before the magistrate at once, he demanded a hearing.

"Have you found your prisoner, officer?" asked the judge.

"No, yer honor, but I have the spalpeen here as assisted him ter escape," said O'Brine.

"How so?"

"Well, yer honor, when I got out inter the strate, there wasn't a wink of the little vagabond ter be seen, only somebody said he ran across ther way beyanst, an' I put for him; just then this fellow come up, and says he, 'he's down in that basement,' and down I went after him. But devil a dust of him could I find anywhere, and a man as was a working down there, tould me that no man had been there at all—at all. So I arrested him for contempt of court."

The judge smiled and asked the prisoner what he had to say for himself.

But the fellow swore point blank that he saw a little fellow run across Centre street from the Tombs, and suddenly disappear very near, if not at the exact locality he had pointed out to the officer.

"Is there any one here who knows you?"

"No, sir; not that I know on," said the prisoner.

"I know him, your honor," said one of the court officers. "He is a loafer and thief."

"That settles it; I shall hold you for further examination," said the judge, waving him away.

"Officer, continue the search for the prisoner."

"I will, yer honor," and O'Brine left the courtroom with a look of triumph.

In the meantime, Shorty had overheard all that had taken place between the darkey and the officer, and as quick as the latter was well out of the way, he popped up out of the box and looked at the artist who was shaking his brush in the direction of the stairs, and muttering all sorts of things that he would do if the officer should return.

"Bully for you!" said Shorty.

"What?" and the darkey was so startled at the sudden apparition, that he tumbled off the staging he stood working on, and contrived to stick his head into the pail of whitewash.

"What's the matter, Coony?" asked Shorty, laughing at the comical figure that sat before him on the floor, half white and half black.

"Who—who dar?" he asked, after gazing at Shorty a moment in great wonder.

"Why, it's me!"

"Who me?"

"I."

"Who I?"

"Shorty."

"Who Shorty?"

"A chap."

"Who?"

"I give it up," said Shorty, laughing.

"Where you come from?"

"Up above."

"Where?"

"Jes' now."

"How?"

"Jump."

"Policeman chase yer?"

"Yes."

"An' you hid in dar?"

"Yes."

"By gosh!" sighed the frightened, half-white-washed darkey, struggling to his feet.

"Don't give me away, will yer?" asked Shorty, leaping from the box.

"Wal, by gosh!" said he, starting back and taking a good, long look at the funny little runt before him.

"Don't give me away."

"Whar yer come from?"

"Long Island."

"Whar goin'?"

"Anywhere."

"Wal, by gosh! What you do?"

"Work on a farm. But, say, don't give me away, will yer?"

"You runned 'way from hossifer?"

"Yes."

"How you get tookened up?"

"Went asleep in a barrel down by the market, an' somebody rolled the barrel again a goose coop an' made a devil of a racket, an' so they took me up; dat's all."

"Didn't do nuffin' but dat?"

"No."

"Den I won't gib you 'way, nohow. But, chile, you wants ter git right up an' dust out ob dis yer, fo' bimeby dat yer hossifer he come back and find you. See?"

"You bet."

"All right; you don't want fo' tu stay 'round heah jus' no time 't all."

"But how shall I get out?"

"By gosh, I don't know. Heah, come dis way; heah am a passageway out on Franklin street;" and following him through a dusty way, Shorty soon found himself out upon the sidewalk again.

"Bully for you!" said he, earnestly.

"Now, chile, you jus' addle over dat way towards de Bowery, and git as fur away from dis yer locality as possible."

"You bet I will," said Shorty, starting away as directed without further delay.

In the meantime, Officer O'Brine was hunting all over the neighborhood for his prisoner.

The thought of returning to the station-house and reporting that such an insignificant little fellow had escaped from him was something that he did not relish much. Besides, it would almost ruin his prospects of promotion.

But there was no help for it, and so, with as much grace as possible, he proceeded to make his report, and to make as good a story as he could of the arrest of the innocent loafer.

Sergeant Polly was not at the desk at the time; but that night, when the relief squad went on duty, he directed O'Brine to remain behind after the others had gone out.

"What was done with the little fellow, Shorty, whom you arrested last night?"

"Faith, I tuck him to the Tombs this mornin', an' he escaped me, so he did."

"Escaped you! I'm glad of it, and confound your thick head. I wish you would escape the force yourself. In the first place, you made an ass of your-

self in arresting him anyway, and I never intended that he should be taken to the court until I could find out more about the case. Have you any idea where he went to?"

"Faith, I have not."

"Well, go to your post, and if I ever know of your making another stupid arrest like that while you are under me, confound you, I will have you 'broken!' you hear?"

"Yes, sur."

"Well, then, go along."

Poor O'Brine was having rather a rough time of it anyway, and a blowing up from his superior officer almost broke his ambitious heart.

As for Sergeant Polly, he mourned the loss of Shorty very much.

In him he thought he had won a prize, and now the visions of the fortune he thought to make in the show business had all melted away, and left him only a sergeant of police.

But he resolved to find him again, if it was possible, for if he did not secure him, somebody else might, and that would make him feel worse than anything else.

Shorty made his way across town until he had reached the Bowery, as the old darkey had directed him, but now what should he do?

He had had nothing to eat since the night before, and there was a very troublesome vacancy in his stomach.

He began to think that life in the great city wasn't such a Fourth of July after all, and almost wished he was back on the farm again.

"Bust my bugle," he muttered, as he walked along, "but this is rather rough on an orphan. How they have bounced me ever since I struck the city. It's the worst old picnic I ever knew. Wonder where I shall get some hash? Golly, but I've lost my bundle, stick, and everything. Oh, just look at them oysters and that meat!" he said, stopping before the show window of an eating-house. "How I would like to fool 'round them for 'bout half an hour. Wonder if I could't work it somehow?" he mused.

The man who attended the oyster bar was seated, back to him, reading a paper, and standing in front of the bar was a box two feet high.

Shorty took in the situation, and a smile stole over his mug.

"They can't only bounce me," thought he, and seeing no other person in the place, he marched in.

Climbing upon the box, he looked up at the chap who was reading.

Standing on the box made him nearly as tall as a man, and so he failed to attract any particular attention.

"Come, old man, lively now. Open some oysters," said he, in a disguised voice that sounded something like that of a man.

The man threw down his paper, and without more than glancing at the customer, began to open the oysters and to place them on a half shell before him.

Shorty scooped them in as fast as the man could open them, and kept on until he had devoured a couple of dozen.

"Got enough?" asked the man.

"All right, boss," he replied.

The man handed him a check for forty cents, motioned him towards the cashier's desk, and then sat down to his paper again.

Shorty got down off the box and quietly walked out of the place. Pulling his hat down over his face in a half comical way, he stopped a door or two below the saloon and sat down on a doorstep to see what would come of it.

He had not been there more than half a minute before the oysterman came tearing out and glanced hurriedly up and down the street.

A policeman happened along just then.

"What's the trouble, Jake?" he asked.

"Trouble! Why, a beat just came in here and eat forty cents' worth of oysters, and then skipped," replied the disgusted oysterman.

"What sort of a looking duck was he?"

"Well, a queer-looking duffer about my hight, with a mug on him something like that little joker sitting there," said he, pointing to Shorty.

Shorty felt his hair beginning to raise up.

"Golly, guess I'm in for it now," he thought.

"Oh, wouldn't I like to catch him! I'd knock every oyster out of him, or I'm a Dutchman!" said he, whereat the policeman laughed, and walked along.

"The big duffer!" he growled. "I say, Johnny, did you see a chap come out of here just now?" he added, addressing Shorty.

"No, I didn't see anybody," said Shorty, in a squeaky voice, entirely different from the one he had spoken with at the oyster bar.

"Well, I wish I could get my paws on him."

"I don't wish so," Shorty said, to himself.

The chap went growling back to his work, and Shorty was all right.

"Oh, I guess yes," said he, getting up and starting down town. "Wasn't that a lucky escape on a full belly? I don't see but oysters are just as good eaten that way as any other. But now where shall I go?"

This was a conundrum he could well ask, but not very readily answer.

The whole world was before him, but there appeared to be altogether too much of it.

Everybody looked at him, and a great many appeared to know him, for every now and then some one would shout:

"Hollo, Shorty!"

But he soon got used to this, and began to understand that he would be called "Shorty" anyhow, whether he was known by that name or not, and he now understood how he was called "Shorty" originally.

And he knew enough to see that he was an odd and comical little duck, and so he could not blame people for laughing at him.

Finally he went into the Atlantic Garden, a great resort for the lovers of lager beer and good music, and having a full belly and a disposition to become acquainted with everything, he concluded to take this place in.

He toddled down into the large concert-room and got upon a seat to listen to the music, which pleased him very much.

But while seated thus, he attracted the attention

struck a bonanza, and was now possessed of more money than he had ever had before in his whole life.

But while at his entertaining pranks, a showman happened in, and seeing what a card he was, or could be made to be, he at once entered into an arrangement with him, and proposed to put him upon the stage of variety theaters as a speciality.

Just as the bargain was closed, who should happen in but Sergeant Polly, who at once recognized him, and understood that he had lost his prize.

But he had no notion of giving it up so.

There was one way left for him yet, so he went directly to the group which surrounded him.

"Hollo, Shorty!" he said.

Shorty knew him, and proceeded to turn pale.

"How came you here, young fellow?"

Shorty was so much confused that he could make no reply.

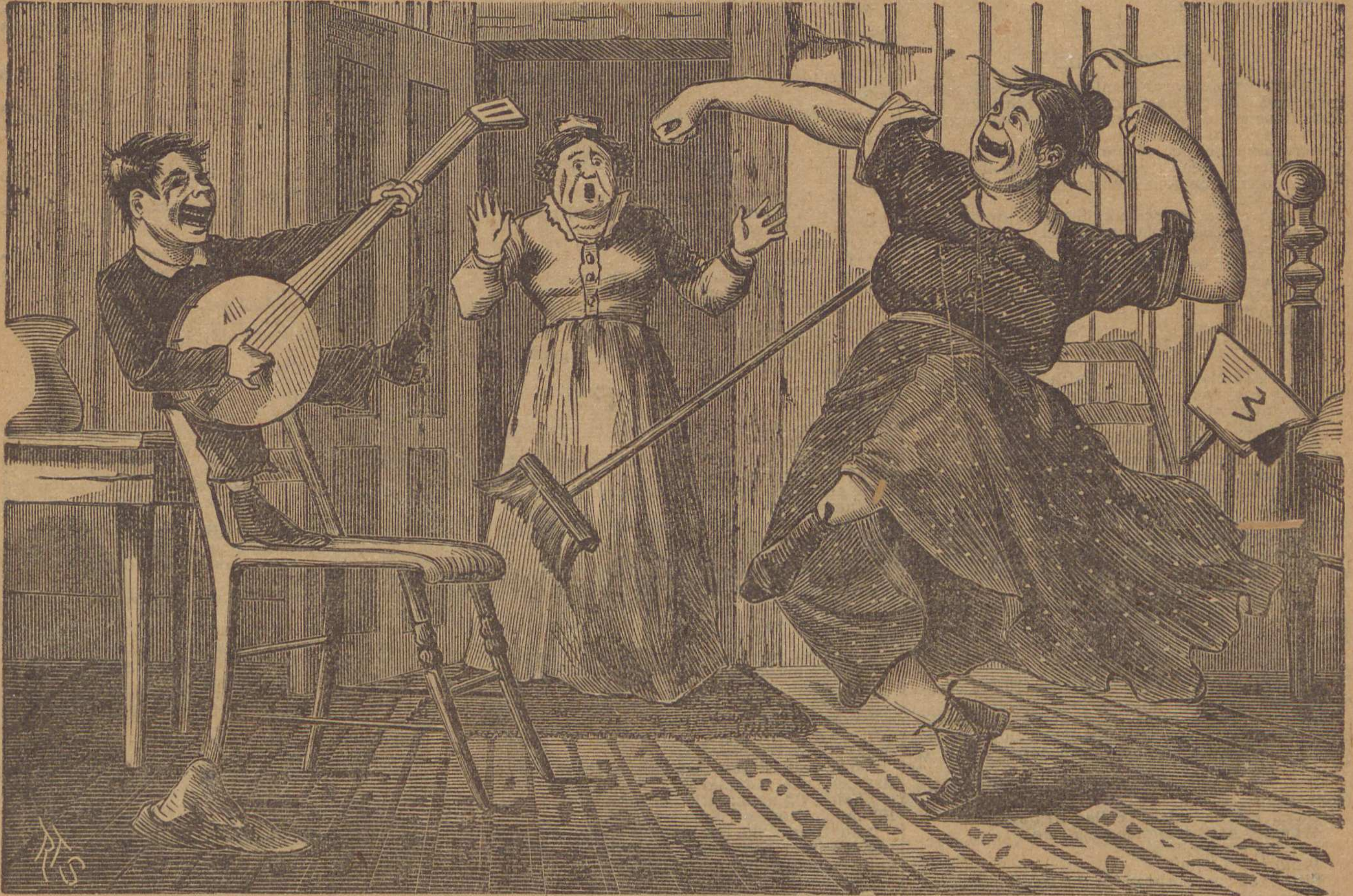
boarding-house until you get all right, and take you to some theater every night, so that you can see how things are."

"That's my porridge," said Shorty, greatly delighted at the prospect.

The sergeant took him to the house where he boarded, and introduced him as a prize that he had accidentally found, and at once began to give him his instructions.

But Mrs. Jones, his landlady, didn't exactly like the idea of having the sergeant's prodigy trained in her house, and before he had been there two days, the Irish servant girl declared open warfare against him on account of some joke or other that he played on her.

The sergeant was as good as his word, and took him to the variety theater every night in order to get him posted about such things, and a more delighted comicality was never seen than Shorty was.



Shorty was delighted. "Go it, ole gal!" he would shout. "Put it right down on de flo'." "Begorra, an' isn't this puttin' it down?"

of some young fellows seated near by, and they began to guy and banter him.

Finally one of them handed him a glass of beer, and asked him to drink.

"Put it in, young fellow. Don't be afraid. It won't hurt you," said one of them.

"What is it?" asked Shorty.

"It's all right. Drink it."

"I'm afraid."

"Nonsense! It's only herb tea."

"All right. I can get away with all the herb tea that was ever stewed," said he, drinking it down without taking the glass from his mouth.

"Bravo!" said they.

"How do you like it?"

"Bully!"

And they laughed to think how it would probably affect him.

They gathered around, and laughed and joked with him, and he appeared to enjoy the sport as much as any of them, giving them in the meanwhile a history of himself, which was in itself a good entertainment.

But the beer began to work, and after he had taken another glass, he felt first-rate, and he gave them quite an entertainment.

After the orchestra had finished, they got him up on the stage, and he sung and danced for the whole company, receiving the wildest and jolliest applause for his performance.

One of the fellows went around with his hat and took up a collection for him, which amounted to nearly five dollars, after which they gave him another glass of beer, and he sang another song with such comical effect that it brought down the house, and everybody pronounced him to be a genius.

Then he went around with his own hat and collected two or three dollars more; in fact, he had

"Give the officer the slip, hey?"

The crowd began to be interested,

"How did you do it, Shorty?"

"Well, I didn't do nuffin," he said.

"Oh, no, suppose not. But I'll take you back, and see if you won't do something."

"No, I don't want to go."

"Oh, give the boy a show," said several of his new-made friends.

"Gentlemen, I know my business. This young fellow was arrested the other night for breaking into a goose-pen down by the Washington Market. He was taken to the Tombs, and there managed to escape from the officer before he was tried. That is why I take him in charge."

"And who are you?" they demanded.

"I am a sergeant of the police," said he, showing his shield.

That settled it, and no further opposition was offered.

So Sergeant Polly, once more in possession of his prize, marched away with it in triumph, although every one regretted that such a fate had overtaken Shorty.

The sergeant hired a carriage and took him at once to his boarding-house, assuring him that everything was all right, and that he would take first-rate care of him, if he would stick by him and do as he directed.

This, of course, made Shorty feel much better, for at first he was sure that he was being taken to prison.

"It's all right, Shorty; I want to make a dancer of you, and then I will give you good clothes and a plenty of money; but if you attempt to run away from me, I shall send you to the Island."

"All right, I'm your katydid."

"Good enough. Now, I will keep you here in my

"By hookey, I have been kicked around pretty lively since I struck York, but I guess I've been kicked into good luck at last."

The other boarders were greatly taken with Shorty, for the evenings when Sergeant Polly was not on duty he would assemble them in his room, or down in the parlor, and have him sing songs, dance, and give imitations. He was an apt scholar, and after going to the show he could return home and go through everything he had seen and heard, greatly to his trainer's delight, for he felt sure that he had a fortune in his hands.

He employed a teacher to teach him how to play the banjo, and every day he showed improvement in whatever he undertook to learn.

But Shorty and the servant girl, Bridget, could not hitch horses any way.

"Bad luck ter ye," she would say, "ye dirty little spalpeen, if ye give me any more of yer nonsense I'll throw ye out of the winder, so I will!"

One day she went up to his room and found him blacked up, and it frightened her out of a year's growth.

She attempted to go for him with her broom, but he was too quick for her, and got out of the way of harm.

But the sergeant concluded that he would make more than an eccentric song and dance card of him, and so he bought a complete monkey dress, in which he could rig himself up and appear just like a monkey, for all the world.

This pleased Shorty more than anything else, for of all things in the world, he thought that the pranks of a monkey were the funniest.

One morning Bridget came into the room to do up the work, and there sat Shorty, looking for all the world like a monkey, on the footboard of his

bed, for he had already learned to cut up many monkey shins.

Bridget was frightened half out of her wits, and dropping her pail and broom, she ran for down stairs as though the devil had been after her with his red-hot fork.

"Murther—murther!" she shouted. "Will ye come here, Mrs. Jones? The devil's sittin' up here on the bed, so he is."

"Why, what do you mean, Bridget?" asked the landlady, coming up stairs.

"Look there!" she replied, pointing to Shorty.

"Gracious goodness, Bridget, run for a policeman—quick!"

Bridget flew to do her bidding, and the landlady pulled shut the room door and held it until the policeman came.

But Shorty was quick enough for them, and long before the officer arrived he had taken off his monkey suit and resumed his own, and sat there waiting for what was to come.

CHAPTER VIII.

We left Mrs. Jones, the landlady, where Sergeant Polly and Shorty boarded, holding shut the bedroom door while her servant, Bridget, was away in quest of a police officer.

Shorty had got out of the monkey dress, which had frightened them so, and was now in his proper clothes, looking as honest as a clam, and all ready to see the sport.

Bridget was not long in coming upon an officer.

"Quick, Misther Policeman?" she called, nearly out of breath.

"What is it?" he asked, grasping his club.

"Murther!"

"Where?"

"The devil!"

"Where, I say?"

"Beyanst, at Mrs. Jones'."

"Who did it?"

"The black devil himself. Faith, he's more nor eaten the ould woman up by this toime."

"How many of them?"

"Only one."

"Are you sure of that?" he asked, loudly.

"Faith, I saw but the wan," said Bridget.

"How big is he?"

"Only a little wan, sure."

"Oh—ho! Show me to him, quick!" howled the officer, grasping his club, and bracing up with a tremendously bold flourish.

"This way," and Bridget started back towards the house at a gallop, followed by the officer at a long-legged dog-trot.

Now, it so happened that this was Officer O'Brine, the same one who had arrested Shorty before, and from whom he had escaped at the Tombs.

He had since then been transferred to another precinct.

Up the front steps of the house flew Biddy, closely followed by the valiant O'Brine.

There was blood in his eyes, and a club in his hand; and, oh! woe to that girl if she had deceived him, regarding the number of murdering devils to be encountered.

"Here he is, mum!" said Biddy, rushing up the front stairs.

"Quick, officer, quick!" called Mrs. Jones.

"Where is he?" demanded O'Brine.

"In here, officer."

"What is he doing?"

"Sitting on the footboard of the bed."

"What is?"

"The monkey!"

"The devil!"

"Yis; yees is right; it is the devil, sure enough," put in Biddy.

Mrs. Jones left the door knob and stood at one side to allow the officer a chance to distinguish himself.

But somehow or other that individual didn't appear to be wildly over-anxious about doing so.

He seemed to be nerving himself up, but finally, seeing what an awkward pause there was in matters, he took his club in one hand and his pistol in the other and threw open the door.

Mrs. Jones and Biddy gazed cautiously in.

There sat Shorty in a high chair, engaged in reading a picture book, and looking as innocent as a Billy goat.

All three of them strode cautiously into the room.

"Hallo, old man!" said Shorty, "what brings you here?"

O'Brine looked astonished and could not speak.

"Where is that monkey?" demanded the landlady.

"Whose monkey?" demanded Shorty.

"I don't know, but—"

"What monkey?"

"Haven't you seen a monkey here in this room?" he asked, with much astonishment.

"Nary a monk, ma'am."

"Is it possible?"

"I've been here all the while, an' I arn't seen no monkey."

"Gracious goodness, I am sure I saw a monkey; arn't you, Bridget?"

"Faith, Mrs. Jones, I'd sware ter it wid a praste this blessed moment, so I wud," said she.

O'Brine made bold to look under the bed and into the clothes press, but of course nothing was found. For Shorty had hidden his monkey dress.

"Young pegger, I know ye, an' ye know that I know ye," said O'Brine, shaking his club at Shorty.

"Do you, though? Hang me if I ever had an introduction to yer."

"Begob, ye're a fugitive from the law, and ye know it, an' ye know that I know it, ye little spalpeen, an' I'd only be doin' my juty if I tuck ye in."

"Better keep yer hands down, ole man, or Sergeant Polly 'll drop on yer," said Shorty.

"Sure, I'm no longer in Sergeant Polly's precinct, I'm thankful ter say."

"Never mind, he can break yer if he wants ter, an' don't yer forget it."

O'Brine knew this was probably true, so he concluded to get out of the muss as easily as he possibly could.

"Niver ye moind, me young chap, an' just see that ye moinds yerself, or begob, I'll hurl on yer the thunderbolts of the outraged law."

"Cheese it, ole man. What's the row, anyhow?"

"Where's the monkey?"

"Give it up. Ask me an easier one."

"Officer, I never heard of such a strange thing in my life," said Mrs. Jones, who had begun by this time to feel rather foolish.

O'Brine turned upon her.

He thought he saw a chance to get off with flying colors.

"Ye are both sure that ye saw a monkey?"

"Positive."

"Well, now, I understand it. Take my advice, and drink more water," said he, knowingly.

"Sir!"

"Fat's that ye say?" put in Biddy.

"An' less liquor," he added in a whisper.

"Sir!" again came from Mrs. Jones.

"Or more water wid yer liquor."

"Good heavens!"

"Or make it longer between drinks."

"Sir, I do not understand you."

"But I understand myself and yees too. Faith, ye are not the only ones as has seen wild beasts an' snakes from drinkin' too hard."

"Great heavens, officer, do you mean to insult me in my own house?"

"Divil a wanst, ma'am, I'm only givin' ye good advice."

"Begorra, thin, ye'd better kape it to yerself, so ye had," said Biddy.

"Och, sure it's myself that knows the weakness of my countrymen, an' I'll forgive ye if ye say no more about it," he said, with a smile.

"Out wid ye!"

"Sure it's the jim-jams ye war both afther havin' an' ye'd better take my advice."

"Out wid you and your advice!"

"Sir, I never drank a drop of spirituous liquor in my life, only for medicine," said Mrs. Jones.

"An' no more did I," said the servant.

"Well, thin, all I have ter say is that ye both feel the need of medicine very often."

"Oh, what an insult this is!"

"Divil a bit of it."

"Oh, yes it is."

"Did ye not think ye saw a monkey here?"

"Yes; and I am sure of it."

"And divil a monkey is here. Doesn't that show that ye have the horrors?"

"Will you be good enough to leave my house, sir?" said she, indignantly.

"Faith, I'd no intention of takin' it wid me. But I'll kape my eye on it, so I will."

"An' barrin' the law ye have wid ye, I'd loike ter toss ye inter the strate, so I would," said Biddy, quite as mad as her mistress was.

"Bounce him. I'll help you," said Shorty.

"Have a care, young chap."

"Oh, go shoot yourself! What are you up here hunting monkeys for? Git, or I'll give yer away bad."

"Ye divil's spalpeen, I've a moind ter give ye a taste of this club."

"Well, try it on!" said Shorty, whose back was now completely up.

"Wait till I'd get ye out some of these foine toimes, I'll larn ye to kape a civil tongue in yer head, so I will," and he started to go from the house.

"Bounce!" cried Shorty, after him.

"All right, me foine lad."

"Git—waltz—caper—skedaddle!"

"Shut up, or I'll come back there to yees," he called out from the bottom of the stairs.

"Oh, cheese it—drop on yourself!" called Shorty, from the top of the balusters.

O'Brine went muttering from the house, and gave the front door the devil's own bang as he closed it after him.

Shorty flew to the window, and called out:

"Bounce, Irish!"

O'Brine turned and shook his club at him.

"Stop, young fellow, or he will return," said Mrs. Jones.

"No fear o' that, ma'am; he's too big a duffer," replied Shorty.

"The impudent wretch," said she, "to insult me right in my own house!"

"Well, faith, what can ye expect of a bloody far-down, anyway?" said Biddy; and both she and her mistress went down stairs.

Shorty was once more left to himself, and he felt so good over the fun he had made that he at once proceeded to stand on his head and cut up all sorts of monkey shins.

He was now practicing in his monkey-dress, getting ready, as it will be remembered, to go upon the stage to make his benefactor's fortune. He had learned very fast on his little banjo, taking one

lesson every day from a teacher, and a lesson in clog and jig dancing from another professional.

This, in connection with going to some show nearly every night, kept him pretty busy, and as happy as a frog; in fact, he never dreamed of having such an easy time, and, of course, he felt as full of mischief as he could hold.

Sergeant Polly was delighted with the progress he was making, and often brought showmen to see him perform.

As for the banjo, he seemed to take to it in the most natural way possible, and before he had been taking lessons a month he could play several jigs and breakdowns.

Biddy came up to do the work in the sergeant's room one day, and Shorty was playing a jig. She happened to be in the humor for dancing, and at it she went, tossing her broom and dustpan into one corner, and doing some of the heaviest dancing that was ever seen or heard. In fact, it might well be called a breakdown, for it was nearly breaking the floor down.

Shorty was delighted.

"Go it, ole gal!" he would shout. "Put it right down dar on de flo'."

"Begorra, an' isn't this puttin' it down?" she asked, as she gave a whoop and came down in a way that made every chandelier in the house rattle.

"Yes. Bully for you. Go it!" he shouted, and at the same time quickened the music.

"Whoop!" she yelled, and just then Mrs. Jones came into the room, all astonishment.

"Bridget!" she called.

"Whoop! Ireland forever!" she replied, all the while so excited that she never noticed who it was that called her.

"Bridget! stop this, I say."

"Go it, Biddy," said Shorty.

"Whoop!" shouted Biddy.

"Stop, I say."

"Go ter ther divil!"

"Bridget, I will call a policeman."

"Call the divil."

"Stop that music, Shorty."

"Can't do it, ma'am; got a contract," said Shorty, giving his banjo an extra trum.

"Whoop! Come along for a dance," said Biddy, catching hold of Mrs. Jones, and treading on her feet while endeavoring to make her join in the dance.

The result of this treading was that they both pitched over upon the floor, Biddy coming down on poor Mrs. Jones with a pounce that nearly knocked the life out of her.

Then Mrs. Jones got mad, and when in this temper she was bad.

She caught Biddy by the hair of the head, and in less time than it takes a dog to catch a flea, they were cursing and swearing while engaged in a regular rough-and-tumble fight.

"Go it—go it! Prettiest fight I ever saw. Go it, Jonesy, ole gal! Go it, Biddy! Whoop for ould Ireland!"

But they rolled over and over on the floor, and before Shorty knew it his chair was knocked over, and he went tumbling on top of the two fighting women.

It had been first-rate fun for him up to that time, but before he knew it the thing changed, and he received one of the roughest old bounces that he ever got in his life. In fact, they nearly killed the poor little devil between them, and the only way he escaped was by crawling under the bed.

Still the two women rolled, tumbled and fought upon the floor, yelling like she-devils.

A bright idea suddenly struck Shorty.

His monkey dress was in a box under the bed.

Quick as a cat could lick her ear, he opened it and slipped himself into the dress.

Then he began to chatter like a monkey, and ran out to where they were fighting.

He jumped upon the top of them; he pulled their hair, and both of them finally saw him. Then they screamed, and got out of the room as quickly as their legs could carry them, followed by Shorty.

They yelled all kinds of yells, for they were sure that the devil was after them both.

Shorty returned to his room, and at once got out of his monkey dress, after which he proceeded to stop a bleeding nose and pay attention to a blackened eye.

But he never saw Biddy after that. She and Mrs. Jones parted company for good that very day, and the landlady kept out of sight for three or four days while undergoing repairs.

Shorty explained the affair to Sergeant Polly, and it was only a short time before the comical thing became known to the whole household, creating a large amount of fun, of course.

But soon afterwards Shorty was given to the manager of one of the minstrel troupes, and trained a week or so in stage business, preparatory to making his first public appearance.

It would not be fair to give away his professional, or stage name, but we will still call him Shorty.

But he was advertised as one of the greatest curiosities of the negro minstrel stage, and a great many things told about him that were not true.

However, that is none of our funeral.

The first place that he showed was in Williamsburgh, and he made a most decided hit; so great a one, in fact, that the company that was only intending to play two nights, played two weeks instead.

Sergeant Polly was, of course, delighted, and saw a fortune ahead.

He paid Shorty a very large salary, or about half what he received for him, and what money the young chap did not need for clothing or board, he placed in the savings bank, during which time he played a long and successful engagement in both Brooklyn and New York.

Shorty was now famous and in a way to earn all the money he wanted. But there was one drawback.

He loved deviltry too well to attend to any other business, and was continually getting into some scrape or other.

After leaving New York he went to Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington, and other cities, in each of which he met with great success, but was of course removed from the friendly care of Sergeant

"Now give us 'Hey, Jim along Josey,' Shorty," he added; and he struck it up immediately, while at the same time, and as if it to illustrate his lecture, two black song and dance men came out and danced to Shorty's music.

It was an immense hit, and electrified the town.

In fact, for the next four days there was nothing talked of but the monkey, Shorty, and his marvelous intelligence.

This, of course, packed the theater every night, and was just what Bob wanted.

But the affair created so much talk, that several physicians and learned men wrote to Bob, requesting an opportunity to examine the wonderful monkey, and publish the result of their examination to the world.

Now, Bob is a first-class advertiser, and a red hot practical joker, as well.

He never really expected that this joke would go

were in the secret, and knew what donkeys these learned men were making of themselves, especially as a reporter was present, to give an account of the affair to the world; but Shorty didn't half like it. It was a bore to him, and he felt like putting a head on somebody.

One of the doctors undertook to explain the wonder to the others, and then Bob gave one of his inimitable, half burlesque dissertations on the subject, which utterly nonplussed and confounded everybody.

"I would like to examine his head," said one.

"But in order to arrive at a right conclusion, we ought to examine his brain," said another.

"I would like to gratify you, gentlemen, in this respect, but I fear that Shorty might object to our uncovering his brain-pan, or that it might give him a headache," said Bob, in all seriousness.



He caught one end of a clothes-line, the other end being fastened to a post, and over it she tumbled, and stuck her head right into that pot of soup.

Polly, and he became even more wild than ever before.

Finally he came under the management of the well-known negro delineator and wag, Bob Hart, and he taught him many new things, and had a great deal of fun with him besides.

In Boston he gave out that he had at last succeeded in teaching a monkey to play upon the banjo, and the result was a great rush of curious people to see the wonder.

Bob was equal to the occasion, and so was Shorty.

It was a strong team, even for Boston.

Shorty, in his monkey dress, was led out upon the stage by the manager.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "I have the pleasure of introducing the monkey, 'Shorty,' whom I have succeeded, after much labor, in teaching to play the banjo. This may seem incredible, but that it may be completely open and above board, I invite any number of scientific men to the Tremont House, where I am stopping, that they may investigate the phenomenon and give the result to the world clothed in the proper language. Shorty will now give you some evidence of his education. Now, then, what do you do first?"

Shorty ran and brought a chair down towards the astonished audience.

"What next?"

He then ran out and brought in his little banjo, after which he hopped up into the chair and began to play a tune.

That audience was astonished.

Was such a thing ever heard of before?

They applauded to the very echo; and Bob delivered one of his well-known serio-comic scientific lectures on the Darwin or connecting link theory, which astonished them still more.

so far, and now that the scientific old duffers had made up their minds to investigate the wonder, he resolved to give them their money's worth.

With this idea in view, he wrote them a letter, telling them that he would be glad to meet them and further the cause of science, at the green-room of the theater on such an afternoon; and he took particular pains to have the affair well advertised and written about in the papers.

And he had about twenty of his friends present, with the understanding that there was to be some red-hot fun.

Finally, at the appointed hour, the scientists came, about a dozen of them, and Bob interviewed them with all that dignity that has created for him the nickname of "Senator."

As for Shorty, in order to prevent them from getting too close a view of him, he had a cage fixed up and placed him in it.

The scientific duffers and doctors gathered around, and looked through the bars of the cage at Shorty, who was behaving as much like a monkey as he possibly could.

"Gentlemen, I am sorry that the temper of my brute pupil will not admit of your getting a closer view of him, but he does not like to be closely inspected. It makes him furious, and he is liable to do bodily harm to those around him, so I have placed him in this cage."

The investigators asked a hundred questions as to where he had picked up this wonderful animal, and he told them such a story that they all stood in open-mouthed wonder, and regarded Shorty as one of the greatest curiosities the world ever saw.

He played the banjo, answered questions by signs, and in dozens of ways utterly confounded those who stood around.

It was all very nice for Bob and his friends, who

"Yes, it might inconvenience him," said one of the party.

"But he is really a wonderful animal, and this goes to prove to my mind that monkeys are only a grade or two lower than men, and that with proper education they could be made to do all that we do with the exception of speaking."

"And I believe they could be taught to speak," said another, "for if we adopt the Darwinian theory, we all came from monkeys and have acquired the art and faculty of speaking, just as they will in time acquire, if we do not take them in hand and teach them ahead of regular development."

"Oh, you go soak your head," said Shorty, unable to stand the nonsense any longer.

"What!" they all exclaimed.

"Go wash your feet."

"Great heavens!" and they all started away from the cage.

"What does it mean?"

"You are all a set of duffers—bounce!"

"Bounce? He can speak!" they said, looking at each other in wonder.

As for Bob, he looked sick. It was the worst old give away that he had ever endured.

"Speak; you bet I can. There's one hundred and fifty pounds of jackass in every one of yer."

"Great heavens!"

"Be quiet, Shorty," said Bob.

"I won't do it. Give us a chew of tobacco."

"Mercy on us!" the doctors exclaimed.

"All right, Shorty; you shall have all the tobacco you want, and a drink of whiskey, if you only behave yourself."

"What is the meaning of this?" asked several.

"Well, gentlemen, I did not tell you that he possesses the power of vocalism, because he will never talk unless very angry, and when angry there is no

doing anything with him. So if you will now withdraw I will be much obliged to you, and will furnish you with facilities for further investigations hereafter."

"Oh, drop on yourselves," said Shorty.

"Shut up, Shorty!"

"I have been shut up long enough. Give us a rest, Bob."

"This is really wonderful," said the doctors, as they left the theater.

Such a laugh as went up after they went out of hearing would have made those scientific old roosters feel much worse than they did, could they have heard it.

But they heard all about it the next day, when the whole huge sell was published in the papers, giving names and full particulars, and such a sick lot of men were never seen before, and will not be seen again.

CHAPTER IX.

SHORTY was released from his cage, where Bob Hart had kept him so long for the benefit of the doctors and scientific men, who had come to examine the wonderful monkey who could play the banjo as well as a negro.

But he was very indignant, and for that reason had given Bob away by commencing to talk while the examination was going on, and blackguarding the learned codgers badly.

But the sell was the talk of the city, and Boston itself had to acknowledge that it had been most beautifully "done."

And yet the affair did not diminish Shorty's popularity much, and week after week he continued to draw crowded houses.

Soon afterwards he came to New York to play an engagement with Tony Pastor, and in a short time became a great favorite. In fact, there was something so ridiculously comical about the little runt that it would make people laugh only to look at him.

And, outside of his regular business on the stage, he was just as full of mischief as ever, and was continually getting into scrapes of some kind, which kept his friends busy to get him out of.

It was while playing his engagement at Tony Pastor's that he got up a bit of extra fun in the audience.

While performing his monkey act, he always left the stage, and would climb up the proscenium boxes, get into the gallery, and create lots of fun for the boys by his antics, being a great favorite with them.

One night who should he see in the audience but Officer O'Brine in citizen's clothes, and in company with his wife. The reader will remember who this policeman was.

Shorty was bound to have some fun with him, especially as O'Brine seemed anxious to show off before people.

He was perched on the railing of the orchestra when O'Brine reached over with his cane and tapped him with it gently.

"Hallo, O'Brine!" said Shorty. "How you was?"

This produced a loud laugh, especially as he had not spoken before, and O'Brine was quite well known to the majority of the company.

O'Brine drew back, and grew red in the face.

"Where's your club, ole man?"

Another yell, and the officer wished he had a club and the privilege of using it on him.

"How is that gal you are mashed on down in Division street? I saw you out with her the other night. Oh, you bad man!"

The audience yelled, and Mrs. O'Brine turned upon him, with fire in her eyes.

"Fat's that the baste says about ye, Pat?"

"Sure, it's only some of his foolin'," said he.

"Arrah, an' be me soul, if I caught ye at any of yer thavin' love-makin' begorra, I'd snatch ye bald-headed, so I would," said she, loud enough to be heard all over the theater.

A louder and a wilder shout followed.

"Will ye hould yer whist, Biddy," said he, savagely. "Don't ye say that they're all lookin' at us?"

"Well, begorra, they can all look an' be darned ter them. Have a care what I'm after sayin' ter ye."

"That's right; go for him, ole gal," said Shorty, and the cry was taken up by the audience, greatly to O'Brine's disgust.

"Out o' that, ye blackguardin' baste!" said he, shaking his fist at Shorty.

"Wipe off yer chin, ole man."

"Be jabbers, if I had a hould on ye, I'd wipe off yer chin," said he, and the audience fairly yelled with delight.

"Look out for the gals, ole man."

O'Brine caught up his new plug hat, and in his anger hurled it at Shorty, who caught it in the neatest manner.

Clapping it on his head, he turned and leaped upon the shoulders of the old chap that worried the big fiddle, and from there to the stage, where he began to cut up all sorts of capers with it.

O'Brine was in a towering passion.

He rose up in his seat, and called him to return the cady, but in answer to it, he crowded it down over his mug, and then stood on his head in it.

The boys were getting more than their money's worth of fun, but O'Brine was getting altogether too much.

His expostulations could be seen but not heard, on account of the uproar, and finally his wife pulled him down into his seat.

Shorty, in the meantime, was making great fun with the hat.

After crushing it by standing on his head in it, he pretended to be very serry for it.

Then he began to imitate a hatter, and to go through with the motions of ironing it out again, smoothing it the wrong way of the nap all the while.

Such a sorry-looking plug as it was when he handed it back again after keeping the house in a roar for about five minutes, was never seen in a St. Patrick's day parade. And so mad a man as its owner was it would be hard to find.

He slicked it up again as best he could, the crowd all the while laughing at him, and shouting their suggestions as to the best way of getting out of the trouble.

It was not until the scene changed, and another performance began, that there was anything like order restored.

Sergeant Polly was there, and enjoyed the fun quite as well as any one did.

O'Brine went on duty at twelve o'clock, but his wife kept up the performance for him until he left for the station-house, and the hot weather which began there lasted him for many a day and night afterwards.

Shorty was well revenged.

One afternoon he was standing with a party of young fellows, mostly actors and showmen, in front of the Olympic theater, when the conversation turned upon hackmen, and their disposition to beat people who patronized them.

"I'll bet you that I can make one of them take me up to Union Square and back again, for nothing," said Shorty.

A goodly wager was made, and one of the many hackmen who stand in the vicinity was hailed, and drove up to the curbstone.

"Take me up to O'Connor's billiard-rooms on Union Square," said he.

"All right, my lad," said the driver, opening the door and assisting him in.

The next minute he started off up Broadway at a rattling pace.

"Be jabbers, I've a soft thing here, so I have," mused the driver. "Sure I'll charge him three dollars for the ride; kape two myself, an' give the boss one. Indade, he's gettin' rich fast enough out o' me, onyway."

Thus he planned things; but he was counting his chickens before they were hatched.

Arriving at the place mentioned, he stopped, and with an itching palm got down from his box to open the door.

He opened it, but his customer was nowhere to be seen.

The Hibernian scratched his head, and looked completely puzzled.

"Bad luck ter ther little spalpeen, he's got away from me. I wonder did he jump out o' the windy? Faith, I'd a hearn him, if he had a opened an' shut the dure, so I wud. Oh, begob! where's my three dollars, now?"

He closed the door again, and began to look around, in the hope of seeing him somewhere.

But he couldn't do it, and so after indulging in a good swear, he mounted his seat and started back to his stand by the theater again.

On arriving there, he stopped in front of it, and at once sought consolation in a glass of gin, all the while swearing that he would make his next customer pay in advance.

"Did ye moind the funny little spalpeen that I tuk up here, a bit ago?" he asked of one of the fellows who had made the bet with Shorty.

"Yes; I saw him. Where is he?"

"May the divil tell ye, for I don't know," said he.

Those in the secret of the bet exchanged glances.

"Whin I got where he tould me tu go, begorra, he wasn't there at all."

"So—so; stepped out on you, hey?"

"I think so, good enough; bad manners to the dirty little spalpeen," he said, lifting the glass of gin to his mouth.

Just then, several others who had remained near the carriage, saw Shorty emerge from under one of the seats where he had hidden himself.

With the agility of a monkey he hopped out of the window on the off side, and skipped across the street.

They saw the joke, and kept still about it until the disappointed driver had gone away.

The thing was then explained with a good many laughs, and Shorty declared the winner of the wager.

But Shorty didn't always have a soft thing, or all the fun he sought for.

His old enemy, O'Brine, learned afterward who it was that played the trick on him, and he swore a ten-mule-power oath that he would be terribly revenged.

With this end in view he proceeded to put up a job on our little hero, and after resting quite a long time he managed to arrest him, pretending that he saw him in the act of picking the pocket of an old gentleman on Broadway.

The old gentleman proved to be Doctor Bump, a wealthy but eccentric man, who managed to retain the name of doctor without having many patients, all of which was lucky for the patients.

He was a bachelor, his aunt being his housekeeper, and a colored woman his servant and cook. Dr.

Bump was a great experimenter, and was always studying up something new that was going to startle the world in medicine.

Poor Shorty was locked up and the doctor's complaint taken, he being almost forced into it by O'Brine, for he never saw Shorty do anything that looked suspicious, and felt reluctant about making the charge that should consign the little fellow to jail.

But the next day when the case came up for trial Dr. Bump was on hand, for he had taken a great interest in the queer little fellow.

O'Brine swore hard enough to send a man to State's prison that he saw Shorty attempt to pick the doctor's pocket at such a time and place. But Shorty had several witnesses to prove that he never attempted anything of the kind; that on the occasion mentioned in the complaint he was simply skylarking on the sidewalk, and ran around the doctor to avoid some one who was running after him.

The judge questioned Shorty regarding himself and the case, and he gave quite an interesting story of what had happened him since he came to New York, together, of course, with the trouble that he and O'Brine had had.

"He's telling lies, judge; he's a bad boy," said O'Brine, who seemed to fear that Shorty would escape.

"And you may be a bad policeman," said the judge, very quietly.

"He escaped from me once down at the Tombs, where I tuk him for trial."

"Yes, he has just told us about that; but I won't attempt to believe both of you. If the prisoner was older and larger, I might discharge him; but as it is, I think he had better be sent to the House of Refuge for delinquents."

"Judge," said the doctor, "will you give him to me if I will adopt and take charge of him?"

"Yes."

"Very well, I'll take him."

"Which had you rather do," asked the judge, "go to the House of Refuge, or live with this gentleman?"

"I'd rather be let alone, judge," said Shorty.

"Well, I think you had better be taken out of the company you are now in, and unless you go with Dr. Bump I shall send you to the Island."

"Well, then, I Bump it, of course," growled Shorty. "But I'll make that big duffer's hair curl for this some day."

"Come right along, my lad, I have got a nice home, and you will be much better off with me than following this life," said the kindly old man, taking him by the hand and leading him from the courtroom, greatly to the disgust of O'Brine, who followed in a very chopfallen manner.

Dr. Bump was delighted, although Shorty was not, and when he went to the house where he had been boarding and packed up his trunks, he made up his mind that he would not stay long in this new place, but escape at the first opportunity.

A carriage took him to the doctor's house on Thirty-fourth street, and Shorty was shown into his room, a nicely-furnished chamber, after which he was introduced to the aunt, a long, angular old maid, cross, sharp and ugly.

"Now, my son, you are one of the family, and you must make yourself at home. Hereafter, you must drop that horrible name of 'Shorty,' and he called Charles Augustus Bump. Understand?"

"Gracious, doc, give us a shorter one," said he.

"No, I have my reasons for giving you that one, and it is a very nice name."

"All right, doc."

A good dinner was served, and this put Shorty in better humor with his situation, which was really a good one.

He liked the doctor very much, for he was, in fact, a nice old man, and he began to think after all that he had possibly been kicked into another streak of good luck.

The only thing that worried him was, that he would be cut off from his old friends and have no more fun; and as for the old housekeeper, he knew she was his enemy the moment they met.

There was the old darkey cook, however, and he concluded that he might have a little sport with her now and then, and so he resolved to take matters easy and watch his chances for escape.

"Dr. Bump, I am astonished," said his aunt, after Shorty had left them alone.

"At what, Aunt Tabbathy?"

"At your strange conduct."

"Why, what now?"

"In bringing that queer little imp into our house, and making him one of the family. What possessed you?"

"Enthusiasm."

"Nonsense."

"My love of medical science."

"Medical humbug, more like," said she, sourly.

"Aunt Tabby, I shall yet electrify the world with that boy. On his account my name will be handed down to future generations in company with that of Jenner and other great men."

"Oh, you are always doing something that is to hand your name down to posterity, but somehow it don't amount to much, and I think your own posterity will be beggars if you keep on this way."

"Ah, but I have always been looking for just such a subject as this. Of course, a person cannot do wonders without a subject to work upon," said the old man, with great earnestness.

"Well, what do you propose to do with him?"

"Hush, do not speak above a whisper lest the very walls prattle my secret expectations."
The old maid looked very much disgusted.
"You see he is a dwarf."
"A monkey, I should say."
"No, a bright, smart fellow, but a dwarf. He was stunted at his birth, and now I am going to supply those juices which nature cheated him of, and which will make him resume growing."
"What nonsense!"
"I can do it, Aunt Tabby. I have given years to this very thought, and now you shall see that my study shall be crowned. Note his height now, and see how fast he will grow after I commence my treatment."
"Pity you couldn't make him better looking."
"I shall do so. The moment my wonderful elixir gets to work on him, he will proceed to grow, and become gradually handsomer in every way. You

said he, looking in at the back window and laughing at her comical contortions in trying to get at the tripe.
"You wants fo' to keep good ways way from me after dis yer, fo' I knows dat I shall broke ebery bone in yer body. You hear me?" said she, stopping a moment to look savage at him.
"It's good for your rheumatizies, Rosa."
"Better look out fo' yer own roomatigums."
"Say, Rosa, how's tripe?"
"By gosh, I—I—"
Here her mad got the best of her, and seizing a pot of cold soup that stood on the kitchen table, she darted with it out into the back yard after him.
Shorty ran towards the back of the yard, and as the infuriated negress rushed after him he caught one end of a clothes-line (the other end being fastened to a post), and over it she stumbled, and stuck her head right into that pot of soup.

He failed to take much notice of it at first, but soon he concluded that something was the matter with his wag, and he started up the basement stairs to get clear of it. But this, of course, only made matters worse, for when the can began to bump and rattle over the stairs, it frightened him into a quicker run, which only increased the racket.
Up stairs and down, yelling and yowling like thunder, did that yellow poodle go in quest of his mistress, or a riddance of his appendage.
The old maid heard the racket, and came out into the hall to see what it meant, as did the doctor.
"Poor Chow-Chow!" she moaned: "what's the matter?"
Chow-Chow didn't know himself. He only knew that something was making it exceedingly lively for him, and, in his madness and confusion, he shot between the old maid's legs as she stood at the



Chow-Chow made a dive for Shorty, but he stood up in the chair and mashed the head of the dog through the head of the banjo.

may laugh or sneer, but you will yet be convinced and confounded."
But the old maid turned away disgusted and unbelieving, resolved to make it just as uncomfortable for the doctor's subject as she could.
It will thus be seen that Shorty was indeed in a queer place.
On one side the old maid was determined to make it hot for him, and the doctor was bound to make him longer than he was.
But of course he knew nothing of all this any faster than it came out, and so he passed his time very much as he liked, and gradually concluded that he had dropped into a soft thing.
The doctor, however, insisted upon it that he should devote a portion of his time to study while he was preparing his wonderful medicine that was to make a man of him.
Nearly every day the old fellow would have some doctor or other at his house to see his subject, to learn all about his age, height, and the like, and when he stopped growing.
Shorty dropped to this game after awhile, and believing that he was being made a show of, he concluded to give people their money's worth. So he would sometimes make himself out to be fifty years of age, and in other respects would tell the wildest cock and bull stories regarding himself.
But his chief delight was in the kitchen with the cook, Rosa, a wench as black as a new hat.
He liked her well enough, and she liked him; but that did not prevent him from playing all sorts of jokes on her.
"Now—now, fo' de Lor', child, I shall harm ye," she said to him, one day after he had dropped a piece of raw tripe down her back inside of her dress.
"Oh, don't go back on a feller you know, Rosa,"

Shorty cut and run for the house before she could get up and pull the pot off of her head, where it was stuck like a closely-fitting helmet. But what a lot of hair oil she did get! It ran down all over her, and as she paddled back to the house, Shorty was rolling and tumbling on the floor of his room, nearly dying with laughter.
But she got even with him the next day when she made up his bed, for she put a lot of cow-itch between the sheets, and it kept him scratching at a lively rate for the next few days. In fact, it kept him so busy that he had no spare time to play tricks on Rosa.
"Wha' am de matter wid you, now-a-days, chile? Pears like you had got the itch, or somefin," said she, with a broad grin.
Shorty never dropped to the racket.
"Guess I have, Rosa. Something keeps me scratching all the time."
"All right, honey, maybe you won't play no more shenanigans wid de ole lady."
"What! Is it something you done to me?" he asked, suddenly.
"Wal, all right. Don't fool wid de old folks any-moa, if yer don't want ter scratch the skin all off yer body. You hear?"
"Good enough, old gal! We're even now."
"Ya—ya—ya!" was all the reply she made, and Shorty was convinced that she had turned the tables on him pretty nicely.
The only companion that Aunt Tabby had was a great, lazy, yellow poodle, a dog of no particular shape or type, and good only to eat and lay around the house.
Shorty loved the dog about as well as he did its mistress, and one day, after he had been there about a week, he tied a tin can to his tail for the purpose of seeing if it would wake up any life in him.

head of the stairs, and tripping her up, both dog and woman went bumpety-bump down stairs, first one on top and then the other, and both yelling forty different kinds of murder in two languages.
Doctor Bump attempted to break his aunt's fall, but the job was too much for him, and all three of them rolled together clear to the bottom of the stairs in a very confused heap.
But in the hurrah the string slipped, or was pulled from the dog's tail, and he limped away, crying and complaining of his treatment.
As for Tabby, the moment she could get to her feet, and found no bones broken, she began to jaw.
"I tell you, Silas Bump, either that rascally little scamp must leave this house or I shall."
"Why, what has happened?" asked the old man in surprise, having no idea of what had caused all the mischief.
"Happened! Why, haven't I fallen all the way down these stairs?"
"Well, yes, and, confound it, you fell on me!"
"And it serves you just right. And haven't I near killed poor Chow-Chow?"
"Well?"
"And wasn't it all on account of that rascal's tying this can to poor darling's tail?" said she, kicking the can across the hall.
"No, was it, though?"
"To be sure it was, and I am going right up to flog him within an inch of his life."
"Don't, aunt."
"And why not?" she demanded, angrily.
"Because I am to commence my experiments with him this afternoon."
"And I only hope he will be as fortunate as your other patients have been," she snapped.
She started towards Shorty's room with blood in her eye, while the doctor limped back to his study.

and wondered what kind of a plaster he should use for his lame hip, and concluding that he must commence his experiments on Shorty right away, before he made the house too hot to live in.

Aunt Tabby caught up an umbrella as she fled towards Shorty's chamber, resolved on making a doctor absolutely necessary for him.

But Shorty had got there in time to slip on his monkey dress, and when she threw open the door with a savage slam, he sat upon the bureau chattering at her.

Uttering a wild yell, she ran back and down stairs again, shouting for Rosa and the doctor, and calling for Chow-Chow at the same time.

All three of them came running up stairs, for Chow-Chow's blood was up, and he wanted blood.

"What is the trouble now?" demanded the doctor.

"Look in there! See that great ape. Sic him, Chow-Chow!" she yelled, for having heard about his playing monkey parts, she knew it was Shorty.

Chow-Chow rushed in, and began to bark loudly, while she attacked him with the umbrella, and Rosa (not knowing but that it was a real monkey) went for him with the broom.

Shorty jumped down, and landed on the dog's back, but as that back was 'up,' he didn't have so much fun with him as he expected.

In fact, the dog grabbed him, and for a few minutes there was a very lively tussel, which ended in Shorty's dress having been torn off of him, and getting rather badly bitten at the same time.

But the doctor finally managed to kick the dog down stairs, and Shorty got out of harm's way.

CHAPTER X.

"WELL, fo' de bressed Lord!" exclaimed Rosa, as she saw that it was Shorty, instead of a monkey.

It will be remembered that the dog, Chow-Chow, and the old maid, Tabby, together with the colored servant, Rosa, had been giving Shorty a lively bounce in his chamber, when they had found him in his monkey-suit, after the trick he had played in tying a tin can to the dog's tail, and kicking up the old boy's own racket in the house.

"You good for nothing serpent, it serves you just right!" said Tabby.

"I thunked it was a monkey fo' shua."

"He's worse than a monkey."

Shorty made no reply just then, but he felt that he had good reason to, for believing that he had been treated worse than a monkey should be.

Just then the doctor returned to the room.

"There's your beautiful 'subject,' Dr. Bump," said the old maid, pointing to Shorty, who was trying to get himself out of his torn monkey-dress.

"Charles Augustus Bump," said the old doctor, "I am surprised at you."

"And I'll surprise you still more, Dr. Bump," put in his old maid aunt.

"You will; how?"

"By informing you that either that good-for-nothing serpent must leave this house, or I shall; there now, that's flat!"

"Don't get excited, Aunt Tabby."

"Don't you Tabby me, sir!"

"I'd like for ter Tabby yer," growled Shorty, to himself.

"Lor' sakes, Miss Tabby, it war only some of his fun," said Rosa, who was inclined to like him.

"Silence, Rosa! How dare you?" squealed the old woman.

"I'se dumfounded, miss."

"Go to the kitchen."

"Iwanish, mum," said the old wench, waddling from the room.

"Arn't you ashamed of yourself, Doctor Bump, to have such a scoundrel in your house?"

"Why, Tabby—"

"Don't why Tabby me; I won't stand it, sir!"

"But let me speak."

"I won't. You don't deserve to speak; and I wonder that you have the face to speak, after what that fellow did to my poor Chow-Chow."

"But he—"

"Yes, and just because the enraged dawling sought just now to revenge himself on the rascal, you had to so far forget the difference between them as to kick the poor dog down stairs. You should be ashamed of yourself, Doctor Bump. Why did you not kick Shorty down stairs?"

"Well, really, Aunt Tabby, I thought he was getting just about enough at that moment."

"Not half enough—not half."

"And my sympathies are always with the undermost dog in the fight," said the kind-hearted old doctor.

"Bah! But you can do as you like. Keep him here, and I and Chow-Chow will leave," said she, bundling out of the room.

"Why is it you can't be a good boy, Charles?"

"I didn't do nuffin', boss," replied Shorty.

"Boss—boss! Don't use such vulgar terms as that, Charles. Address me as doctor."

"All right, Doc. But I didn't do nuffin'."

"Nothing, indeed! How about Aunt Tabby's dog, Chow-Chow?"

"Chow'd I know?"

"Why, Charles Augustus Bump! above all things, don't fib; always tell the truth. Now you know that you tied a tin can to the dog's tail, and—"

Here the old man's sense of the comical overpowered him, and remembering how the hated cur went up and down stairs with the can rattling and thumping behind him, and how he finally brought grief to the old maid, he had to turn away and laugh.

"I didn't tie no tin kittle ter his tail."

"What? Don't tell an untruth, Charles Augustus Bump."

"Honor bright, Doc. Hope'r die; now I lay me down ter sleep," said Shorty, holding up his hand.

"What?"

"Now, Doc, I'll tell yer how it was."

"That's a good lad, speak the truth."

"Wal, yer see, me'n Chow were a kinder foolin' down stairs. There was some cans an' some string down there, an' Chow, he somehow got a friskin' 'round, an' one end of a string kinder got mixed up 'round his waggin' part, an' der odder end got hitched ter a can, an' then der dern fool began ter run an' kiya like as if der devil was behind him."

"Why, Charles Augustus Bump!" said the old man, holding up his hands, and looking dreadfully shocked at Shorty's profanity and his improbable yarn.

"Fact! Now I lay me," said Shorty, again holding up his hands and looking honest.

"It is impossible, sir."

"All right. If you won't have it, give it to somebody else."

"What! do you think that I would repeat such a story to any one? No, sir. Your moral training has been sadly neglected, and while I am increasing your physical stature, I must also attend to your morals."

"I'd like to attend to Chow's morals."

"You must never touch the dog again."

"Oh, won't I though?" thought Shorty.

"To-morrow I shall begin my experiments on you, and shall probably be able to change your whole nature for the better."

"Make a preacher of me, won't you, Doc?"

"Perhaps so."

"Won't that be just old hunk?"

The doctor gazed at him a moment with astonishment, while Shorty turned a back handspring to manifest his delight.

"You are a strange creature. But my triumph will be all the greater if I succeed in making something out of you."

"It'll be a big thing, Doc, if you make a preacher out of me."

Dr Bump thought so, too; but having great faith in the wonderful elixir that he had invented, and with which he proposed to make Shorty resume growing and become as large as anybody, he resolved to commence experimenting upon him at once.

"I shall probably have some of my brother physicians here this evening to see you; so dress yourself all up clean," said he, going from the room and leaving Shorty to himself.

"Wal, I'll be rammed, banged and hammered, if this isn't the worst I ever knew. That cussed dog nearly picked my bones. But won't I make him sick? you bet!" he muttered to himself, as he began washing and fixing up. "Didn't think the onery cuss had so much fight in him. But, oh, beeswax! wasn't it fun ter see him kitin' up and down stairs wid dat tomatus can tied ter his narrative! An' when he ran atween der ole gal's legs an' tumbled her down stairs on top of the doc, I thought I'd bust a pimple!" and he laughed heartily in spite of the bites and bruises he had received afterwards.

Ten minutes after getting fixed up he stole down into the basement where Rosa was.

"By gosh! afo' de Lord, chile, dat war de funniest thing dat I eber hea ob," said she, laughing heartily.

"Oh, yes, very funny for you."

"Gosh darn, look out fo' de ole woman, fo' if she hea us laughing 'bout it, she nigh eat us up."

"Oh, she be hanged!"

"But I'se proper sorry dat I hit you wid de broom, I is, fo' de Lord."

"Oh, that's all right, Rosa."

"But as shua as I is a poo' weak sinner, I funk you war a morkey, shua. Whar you get that skin?"

"Well, you see, Rosa, I scared a monkey out of it, and then took it myself."

"Go 'long, chile, what you take de ole woman fo'?" said she, indignantly.

"Fact! Hope'r die, Rosa."

"Wal, fo' de Lord, chile, dar am some quar doins in dis yer world."

"That's so, Rosa. Where is that dog?"

"Hush, now, honey! I'spect dat he am up stairs wid de ole woman. But you better look out how you fool wid dat dog; he'll harm you some ob dese days."

"Oh, he won't hurt nobody when I get through wid him, an' don't you forget it."

"Better look out now, I's tellin' on yer."

"Got anything good ter eat?"

"Course I has," and she proceeded to get him something nice.

This made them all solid together again, and Shorty went away feeling much better, although he failed to get a sight of Chow-Chow again that day.

That evening a couple of medical men called, and Shorty was again summoned to the doctor's office for inspection.

But the old man had learned too much to allow them to question him, knowing that he would give them all sorts of "taffy" if he got a chance, so he did the talking himself.

"Yes, gentlemen, this is the subject I have been telling you about. How old he is can only be conjectured, but he is at least fifteen or sixteen. Now, you, of course, understand that the cause of his being stunted in growth is the exhaustion of the

moco-buncum fluids. With my elixir I propose to restore these fluids, and again set nature to work."

The physicians smiled and exchanged glances.

The fact was, they both regarded the old man as a simple old enthusiast, who was always pretending or trying to do impossible things, and they had visited him more for fun than anything else, although they pretended to agree with him in his proposition.

Shorty, of course, could understand little or nothing of all their learned lingo, and was only too glad to get away and return to his room and banjo.

That night he took it down to the kitchen and played for Rosa.

She was delighted, of course, as where was there ever a colored person who did not love the banjo?

"Oh, chile! am dat you?" asked the old woman.

"Here I am again, old gal!" said he, taking a chair, and striking his banjo.

"Hi! wha' am dat you got dar, honey—a banjo?"

"Yes, a barnjo, Rosa."

"Oh, gosh! afo' de Lord, honey, dat am good!" said she, approaching him. "Touch him some mo', chile."

Shorty played a few bars of a break-down.

"Oh, chile!" she groaned, "do some mo'."

He played the tune clear through, and the old negress swayed to and fro, tossing her head and arms, and rolling her big eyes around in perfect ecstasy.

"Oh, honey! you make de old woman feel so good. Go lightly dar—go lightly! Oh, my, or de fus' you know I shall forget dat I am old and stiff."

"Throw yourself, old gal," said Shorty, giving extra tone to his banjo.

"Oh—oh, I know that dar am wings sproutin' out on de ole gal. I feels 'em comin', and I's a gwine ter fly!"

"Fly away, old angel!"

"Oh, mackerel!" she groaned, and unable longer to withstand the influence of the music, she began to show some very creditable "Essence of old Virginia."

"Sail in," said Shorty.

"I's a sailin', honey."

Rosa weighed but little less than three hundred pounds, and when she danced she was not exactly fairy-like. On the contrary, she shook the whole house and made everything rattle, from the pots and kettles in the kitchen to the loose boards of the attic floor.

This of course created a sensation, which neither she nor Shorty knew anything about, although if they had known it, they were feeling too good to care a snap if the old house came down over their heads.

But a part of the house came down, in the shape of Aunt Tabby and Chow-Chow. She threw open the kitchen door just as Rosa was in the hight of her glory.

Chow-Chow made a dive for Shorty, but he stood up in the chair and mashed the head of the dog through the head of the banjo, and then allowing him to run with it ki-ying around the room, he leaping down and skipped out of there on the double quick, never stopping until he had reached his chamber up stairs.

Such a row as that dog and banjo, and Rosa kicked up, was never seen in that kitchen before.

The wench was frightened half out of her wits, as was Aunt Tabby, who was chasing her poor dog around, trying to get the banjo off his neck, and, taken altogether, there was a lively dance.

To make affairs worse, Chow-Chow bit Tabby while she was trying to get him out of his unpleasant predicament, and then she howled with pain, which made matters even livelier.

But finally things were quieted down a bit, and the old maid got a chance to speak.

"Rosa, you shameless old wretch!" was her first intelligent favor.

"Bress de good Lord, Miss Tabby, I—"

"Silence, you old fool!"

"I—I—I couldn't help it noways, I couldn't, as sb' a as I am a miserable sinner."

"Oh, you shameless old thing!" screamed Tabby, as she wound her handkerchief about the bleeding favor that Chow-Chow had given her.

"Oh, but I couldn't help it, Miss Tabby," pleaded the old wench.

"You pack up your duds and get out of this house at once, and take that miserable monkey with you. I'll see if I have any authority here or not!" said she, savagely.

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Rosa.

"And as for this thing—"

She espied the broken banjo lay'ng on the floor, and made a dive for it.

She jumped upon it as though intending to grind it to powder beneath her angry feet, but those angry feet only flew up in the air, and the old girl turned a back somersault and sat down in a tub of water, splashing it all over the floor, and wetting herself completely.

Then she shouted fire and nine kinds of murder as soon as she could get her breath, and kicked her spindle legs up and down like all possessed.

Rosa pulled her out, but couldn't wring her out, and so she twirled herself up stairs, dripping like a drowned rat, and howling for vengeance.

Well, that was a nice time. Dr. Bump came out to see what the riot was, but meeting with his wet and irate aunt, she proceeded to vent her spleen upon him then and there.

"You old hog!" she whooped, seizing him by the hair, and jerking him down on the floor proceeded to kick and bang the old fellow to her heart's con-

tent, after which she went up to her own room without even stopping to explain why she had been so loving.

Shorty was listening to it all, and thinking that she was coming for him, he ran to the ladder leading to the roof, and got out of harm's way. But she seemed to forget him in her own madness and misery, and finally, finding that she was bent on slighting him, he went back to his room and finished his laugh.

Well, it took two or three days for Tabby to get over that racket, during which she kept her room and allowed no one to approach her. Rosa didn't leave, for while the old aunt was out of the way, the doctor became boss, and told Rosa to keep on about her business.

The day following the hurrah, Dr. Bump began his experiments upon Shorty.

The first thing he did was to make him up a bot-

"By gosh fire, it orter be good for sumfin', for it arn't much good fo' de taste. Shua dat you habn't been foolin' de ole woman?"

"Honest Injin. Hope'r die, Rosa,"

"Tastes mighty quar."

"Oh, you ain't used to high toned tods!"

"An' I guess I'se glad I arn't. 'Peers jus' like war gwine ter heave," said she, sitting down, and growing pale.

"Oh, don't heave—keep it down."

"Chile, I don't like dat wine no ways, an' don't yer bring no mo' ob it heah. You hea?"

"Oh, all right," said Shorty, leaving the room.

The poor old darkey did "heave," and while she was at it the doctor came into the kitchen.

"What's the matter Rosa?" he asked.

"Oh, Doctor Bump, I'se awful sick!" she moaned.

"Jes' awful."

"What has napped?"

"That's right. Stick up for him. But I tell you I know better. See how sick he is!"

"Yes, kick him into the backyard."

"Unfeeling wretch! I'd like to kick you and your 'subject' out there. Come, poor Chow-Chow, let me take you up to our room," and lifting the ugly beast she lugged him up stairs.

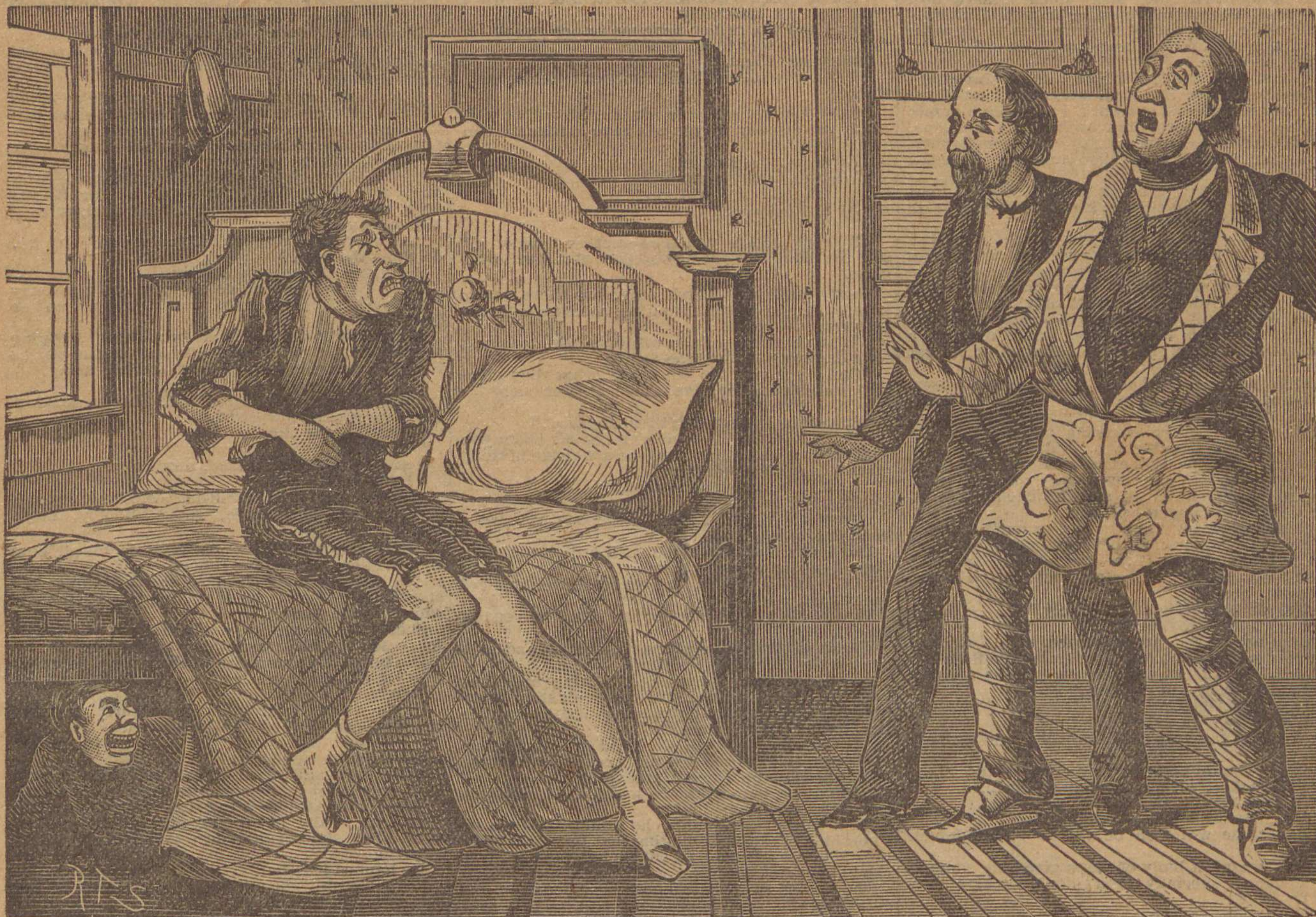
Oh, what a sick dog that was!

"Poor, darling Chow-Chow! What has happened to its manners, pet?"

While making this tender inquiry, she put her long, red nose down close to the dog's mouth, and for want of something better he seized it. Then she yelled bloody murder on account of her bloody nose, and it was several minutes before she could make him let go of it.

Oh, dear! what torments she was suffering on account of that runt, Shorty.

"I must fortify myself," said she, and diving for



The old fellow hurried to the room followed by another doctor. When he beheld Jimmy he staggered back, and nearly knocked his friend down stairs.

tle of some kind of stuff that was sickening enough to turn the stomach of a cast iron horse, and this he required him to take a wine glass full every two hours.

He got one dose of it, and that was enough.

"If I take any more of that, may I be eaten by cockroaches!" said he.

But a bright idea struck him.

He would play a dose of it on Rosa, and get some of it into Chow-Chow, if possible, so taking a large glass of it, he went to the kitchen.

"I say, Rosa," said he, in a whisper.

"What am it, chile?"

"Want a drink of watermelon wine?"

"What am dat you say? Watermillion?"

"Sure, best you ever saw."

"Oh, honey, but I'm a tea-tollum."

"Oh, that's all right. This aren't 'toxicating."

Take it down quick, before anybody comes."

"Where you get him?"

"It is the doctor's Quick!"

"Sure dat it won't make me drunk?"

"Nonsense! It wouldn't make a cat drunk."

Drink it down."

She took the goblet.

"Hurry up!"

"Watermillion!"

"Yes, best in the world."

She raised it to her lips.

"Quick—somebody coming!"

She swallowed it at a gulp.

Shorty turned toward the door.

"Don't give it away."

Rosa stood tasting and looking steadily at vacancy.

"Dat am de wus ole wine dat I eber saw in de whole course of my life," said she, at length.

"Good for yourumatizies, Rosa."

"Oh, dat boy gib me some ob your watermillion wine jus' now."

"Watermelon wine! I never heard of such a thing. Where is it?"

"Dar am de glass," said she, pointing to the goblet from which she had drank.

The doctor took it up and smelled of it.

"Why, this is some of my first degree elixir."

"Oh, Lord, what am dat?" she moaned.

"Something to make people grow."

"Oh, by gosh, it makes me grow sick."

"The little rascal. He is playing tricks on me."

"Oh, dear! I fink he play de trick on me."

"Never mind, Rosa, it will not harm you."

"But, oh, how it makes me sick."

"I'll fix the little mischief," said he, going from the room.

In the meantime Shorty managed to "fix" Chow-Chow.

He had given a large dose to him in some soup, and by the time the old man got up stairs he met the dog rolling and tumbling down, a completely sick and used-up purp.

This of course created a sensation, and Aunt Tabby came rushing from her room to see what had happened to her darling pet, and Shorty, who had been on the watch, slipped into her room and exchanged his bottle of medicine for a similar bottle of old Tom gin which she always kept on her dressing-table to quiet her nerves.

"Oh, dear! Poor Chow-Chow is dead, I know he is!" she moaned, as she flew down to embrace him.

"He can't be dead, for he is kicking yet," said the doctor.

"Oh, you unfeeling monster! He has been poisoned by that brute of a Shorty, I know it."

"Nonsense, he had no poison."

her bottle of gin she swallowed half a pint of Shorty's medicine before she discovered the mistake.

Five minutes later she was laying on the floor by the side of Chow-Chow, quite as sick as he was, and like him, not caring a chew of snuff whether she lived or died.

The doctor went to Shorty's room, but he had gone out on the roof and could not be found. Thinking that he had gone out to play somewhere, he concluded to go out for a short walk himself, and look after Shorty when he returned in the evening.

All this of course was fun for Shorty, whether it was for the others or not. But he knew too much to show up where Rosa was until after she had recovered from her sickness and anger.

So he went back to his room and began to drink the old maid's gin, and in less than half an hour he was as drunk as a lord.

When Dr. Bump returned he went to see how his wonderful elixir was working, and found Shorty trying to balance himself on his ear in the middle of the floor.

"Well, Charles, how are you getting along?"

"Bully, ole man! fus class."

"Have you taken all your medicine with the exception of what you gave Rosa?"

"You bet. Bes' medicine ever saw in all my life. Bes' 'n the land. Have a drink?" he asked, getting up and staggering towards him.

"Why, how strangely it affects you."

"Same ole way, Doc, jus'er same. Hic! Brace up, Doc."

"Mercy on me, you are drunk!" said the doctor, beginning to understand matters.

"Drunker 'n a biled owl!"

"What does it mean?" he asked taking up the

almost empty bottle and smelling it. "Why, this is my aunt's gin."

"No, I'm hanged if it is; mos' all mine."

"This is shameful!" and rushing from the room, he went to consult his old aunt and to demand an explanation.

On entering the room what a sight met his gaze! He started back in astonishment, while Shorty's voice could be heard above, singing: "Shoo Fly, don't bodder me."

CHAPTER XI

AUNT TABBY and her dog Chow-Chow lay sick and groaning upon the floor, and standing on the table was Shorty's bottle of medicine, what there was left of it, that had made Rosa, Tabby and Chow-Chow feel so badly.

Dr. Bump felt a trifle "sick" himself, and almost gave up all hope of ever getting enough of his wonderful elixir into Shorty to start him to growing again, as he had fondly hoped to do, in order to astonish the world.

"I must have a talk with him and tell him what I propose to do, and by moral suasion get control of him; and if that will not work, I will lock him into his chamber and force him to take the medicine; for on this rests my hopes of fame and immortality. I'll fix him; but first of all, I must fix these sick folks."

A few restoratives brought Aunt Tabby and Rosa around all right, but the dog kept on being as "sick as a dog" until he got better.

Dr. Bump, of course, knew all about the trick that Shorty had played, and so he was thoughtful enough to put the gin bottle back on Tabby's table before she got well enough to see into the cheat, and took the medicine back to Shorty's room.

The reader will remember that Shorty had exchanged his bottle of medicine for the old maid's bottle of gin, and while she got sick on it, he got drunk on the gin.

As soon as Dr. Bump had relieved the colored servant and his old aunt, he went back to Shorty's room for the purpose of giving him a good talking to regarding his mischievous inclinations.

He found him dancing a breakdown on his bed, and varying the performance by turning flip-flops.

"Why, Charles Augustus Bump, what on earth are you doing?" he asked, starting back, in alarm, at Shorty's venturesome pranks.

"Got a circus, an' I'm boss performer."

"Stop this moment!" said the old man.

"Can't do it, doctor. Your medicine's got a workin' on me," he replied, leaping up and whirling heels over head.

"The gin is working, more likely."

"Bully medicine that was!"

"I am astonished and ashamed, sir. How dare you play such a trick on Aunt Tabby and Rosa?"

"Well, Doc, I didn't want the nasty mess, and you see I didn't know but they did."

"I am astonished."

"Were they?" he asked, laughing.

"Yes, and you may be before they get through with you."

"They wouldn't hurt a sick cove, would they, Doc?" he asked, with a hiccup and grin.

"Call me Doctor, sir."

"Well, Doctor, sir, how's Chow-Chow?"

"I guess he will soon be well enough to defend himself."

"Now, wasn't it bully of me to give him some of my medicine, 'specially when I didn't want it all myself?"

"Stop such nonsense, sir. The medicine, the wonderful elixir that I am giving you, is to perform a miracle on you."

"Form a what on me?—hic!"

"A miracle."

"I don't want nothin' formed on me."

"You are a dwarf."

"What's a dwarf, Doc?"

"Why, a person in whom the elementary fluids become exhausted in their youth, and they stop growing as you have done."

"The deuce you say!" exclaimed Shorty, while the doctor threw up both hands and started back in astonishment.

"Why, Charles Augustus Bump, I am shocked at your profanity."

"Well, Doc, hang me if I knew my juices was dried up. I'll have ter chew tobacco, won't I, ter get some more?"

"No—no. This medicine I am giving you will supply them and set you growing again."

Shorty got up on the foot-board of the bed, where he sat cross-legged, looking at the doctor.

"Do you understand me?"

"No, I'll be rammed, banged, whanged and slammed if I do. Will it make Chow-Chow grow?"

"Probably not; for he has attained his growth."

"Well, it made him grow sick, didn't it? But what's yer racket, Doc?"

"I design to restore your juices so that you will resume growing and become as large as any man, and this elixir will do it."

"Lixer! Well, it ticks me at all events," said he, toppling over on to the bed.

"But you want to grow larger, don't you?"

"No. I have more fun than a big cove does."

"But see how much better you would look if you were only as large as I am."

"Don't see it, ole man. If I's as big as you be I couldn't do no monkey acts nor have any fun; an' I'd have ter have bigger clothes, an' it'd cost me more for hash."

"Hash?"

"Well, fodder, stuffin', grub."

"But are you not my adopted son? and am I not able to provide for you?"

"That's bully; but I don't want ter grow any more, boss. If I did some girl might want ter marry me. Maybe Aunt Tabby would get mashed on me," he added, with a laugh.

"Nonsense! I have adopted you to save you from being sent to prison, and for the sake of trying the effect of my elixir upon you. I will provide for all your wants, but in return you must do precisely as I say, and take this medicine as I order you."

"Not much, old man," said Shorty, leaping from his bed, thrusting both hands into his pockets, and walking up and down the room. "Not any in mine, thank yer, boss."

"But you must take it."

"If I do you'll have ter shoot it inter me wid a gun," said he, resolutely.

"And had you rather have me return you to the judge and be sent to the island?"

Shorty was silent.

His terror would make him submit to almost anything.

"Now, you behave yourself, and all will be well; but if you disobey me you will have to take the consequences."

"All right," he growled.

"Will you take the elixir?"

"Won't you mix it wid gin?"

"By no means, sir."

"Well, sail in."

"Now let me see you take another dose of it," said the old man, pouring out some of it into a wine glass.

Shorty made up a horrid mug; but there was no help for it, and he swallowed the mixture with the best grace he could.

"That's a nice boy; you will only have to take it for a day or two," said the doctor.

"Can't yer give me somethin' what they gives a cove as is goin' ter have a hash-chewer out?"

"Chloroform?"

"Somethin' so they don't feel anythin'."

"No; you must have your senses all about you while taking this. But it will be a wonderful thing when finally accomplished."

"And I'll be as big as anybody?"

"Yes."

"Then all right. I know somebody as'll get a head put on 'em."

The doctor left him alone with orders to take a dose of medicine every hour.

"Oh, yes, I'll take it; I'll take and chuck it out of the window, see if I don't," he muttered.

True to his word he threw the next dose out of the window.

The wind blew it along for a rod or more and landed it in the face of a policeman.

"Hallo, up there!" he yelled, looking up at the house he was in front of. "If you don't stop squirtin' your tobacco juice down here, I'll go up an' club the stuffing out of some one!"

But the windows were all closed in that particular house, and no one saw the exasperated officer shake his club but Shorty, and you bet he enjoyed the fun much better than he would if he had swallowed the medicine.

Then he felt as though he would like to have something to eat, and thinking that Rosa had probably got over her mad, he concluded to go down to the kitchen and see her.

The doctor saw him go past his office door, and called him in.

"Charles, come here."

"Flip-flop, here I am again," said he, turning a handspring and landing into the middle of the room.

"Be quiet, sir. Just think how exceedingly indecorous it is to be continually cutting up such capers as that."

"In—de—what? Say it again, Doc, I want ter git der hang of a few jawbreakers."

"Silence, sir. Have you taken your medicine?"

"Oh, yes; took it down like a little man."

"That's right; and you will soon begin to grow nicely."

"Good enough," said he, turning away. "I wonder if it has made that cop grow any? I seen him grow red in the face, anyway," he mused, as he started for the kitchen.

As for Tabby and Chow-Chow, they were still confined to their room.

"How you vas, Rosa?" he asked, opening the door and looking in.

"Now—now, chile, I gibs yer good fair warnin', don't yer come in dis yer kitchen, or I shall harm yer," said she, angrily.

"What's der matter, ole gal?"

"Mine what I told yer now."

"What yer mad about, Rosa?"

"I jest lets yer know what I'm mad 'bout if yer gets near 'nough ter me, see 'f I don't."

"Why; what'd I do?"

"Done jes' 'nough ter get me in debt ter yer for a poundin', gettin' me ter drink dat nasty stuff an' tell me it war watermillion wine. Go 'way dar, or I shall fro somefin' at yer; 'clar ter goodness dat I shall."

"Well, wasn't it good?"

"Go 'way dar!"

"The doc makes me take it every hour. He says it will make me grow, an' when I get as big as a duffer wid whiskers, I'll marry yer, Rosa, if yer'll only make up."

"Go long wid yer! Marry ole woman like me," said she, indignantly.

"Yer know I'm mashed on yer, now."

"Go way, or I mash you!"

"I say, Rosa, make up, an' I'll go out an' buy you a quart of beer."

He knew how to strike her weak spot every time. She made no reply, but contented herself with throwing angry glances at him as she went on with her work.

"Give us the can," Rosa, he added, after waiting a moment for her to think how good some fresh beer would taste.

"If yer wants der can, go get it," she replied, less angrily.

"All right," and he darted into the room to secure it.

She did not offer to smash him, as she said she would, but she pretended that she didn't care anything for him or the beer.

He went, and soon returned with the beer, which he placed upon the kitchen table; Rosa half smiled as he did so, and in five minutes' time she was all right again.

Now Shorty had prepared another trick for the old gal, for while he was out he bought a china turtle about three inches long, and placed it in the bottom of the can where she would see it only after she had drank the beer nearly all up.

"Now, honey, you is a bad, tricky boy, an' I don't know but dat you hab put somefin inter dis yer beer, so you drink some of it," she said, turning him out a glass full.

"All right, I'll drink it all if you say so," said he, drinking the beer.

She watched him suspiciously.

Now, honey, I guess de ole lady can get away wid de rest ob it," said she, putting the can to her lips.

She drank it nearly all down without stopping to take breath; but when the china turtle caught her eye, she flung the can, beer and all, away.

"Good gracious!" what am dat?"

"Why, it's a turtle, Rosa," said Shorty, pretending to be greatly surprised.

"How it come dar?"

"Give it up."

"Am it pizen?" she asked, anxiously.

"I dunno. Do you?"

"How come dat critter in dat beer?"

"Must be a beer turtle," replied Shorty, laughing.

"It's gwine right up an' ask de doctor all 'bout it," said she, getting the shovel.

She attempted to scoop up the turtle upon the shovel for the purpose of taking it up stairs to show it to the doctor.

Shorty stood close by, ready to burst with laughter to see how she was helping on the sell.

She poked it around cautiously as though expecting that it would bite her, and finally got it upon the shovel.

As she started to go up stairs, Shorty snatched the turtle and placed it in his pocket.

"Who do? Look out! He bite you fo' shua!" cried the astonished wench.

"Oh, that's all right, Rosa," said he, taking it from his pocket and placing its head in his mouth.

Rosa watched him with astonishment for a moment, and finally, not seeing any indication of its being alive, she began to drop to the joke.

"What dat?"

He handed it to her.

"Great gosh!" she exclaimed, as she took it, and Shorty laughed loudly.

"Nuffin' but china!" she muttered. "I 'clar ter gracious, dar am mo' deviltrum in you dan dar is in a dozen of big men. Golly, how it seared me!"

Shorty was laughing loudly.

"Don't come 'round here wid any mo' ob your nonsense, fo' I 'clar ter goodness dat I can't stand it," she scolded.

"Turtle in your tod!"

"Go 'way, chile."

The trouble was patched up, and Shorty was victorious as usual, and at the same time managed to get something good to eat from her.

The next day the doctor began to be anxious regarding the effect of his medicine upon Shorty, for he had consulted with a learned physician regarding the case, and he gave it as his opinion that he would grow very rapidly when he began.

This fact he made known to Shorty, and told him to be prepared for it, and so he resolved to do so. This was how he did it.

By means of the ladder leading to the roof he had made the acquaintance of a fellow living next door, whom he often met out on the roof when he came for fresh air, and like most everybody else, he took a great fancy to Shorty.

He told him all about the nonsense that Dr. Bump was trying to come on him, and between them they put up a job on him.

At the end of the third day the old fellow asked him how he felt?

"Kind'r queer, Doc," said he.

"How? What are your symptoms?" he asked, eagerly.

"Well, I feel kinder all alive inside."

"Ah! that is it; the elixir is working. The renewed juices are beginning to permeate your whole system, and you will soon begin to grow. Good! Double your dose next time, and let me know how you feel," said he, rushing from the room.

He met Aunt Tabby down stairs. She had been very sober and sarcastic since her sickness and kept her own room mostly.

"It is working!" he exclaimed.
 "What is working?"
 "My elixir."
 "Is he dying?" she asked, calmly.
 "No—no, but he feels it; feels all alive in the inside."
 "Well, how should he feel; dead?"
 "Aunt Tabby, you have no stomach for science, and no sympathy for me. But the time is close at hand when you will gladly have it known that the renowned Dr. Bump is your nephew. Ah! it begins to work! Fame and fortune are all within my reach!"
 She turned coldly away, without waiting to hear anything more. Chow-Chow kept close to her side, for after his late experience, he came to the conclusion that she was the only friend he had.
 Dr. Bump at once started to hunt up some other doctor to tell his hopes to.

"Where do you feel bad, Charles?" asked the old man, kindly.
 "Oh, all over, sir. I feel weak."
 "No doubt of it."
 "If I had a thimblefull of brandy."
 "You shall have it," said he, rushing down stairs.
 Here he informed Tabby and Rosa of what had happened, and they also hurried up to the room.
 "Here—here is some brandy," said he, handing Jimmy a wine glass full.
 He raised it to his lips, winked at the other doctor, and drank it at a gulp.
 "Fo' de Lord! de days ob miracles am not pass-ed," said Rosa, with great seriousness.
 As for Tabby, she had nothing to say, only that she was glad he had grown better looking.
 "Dr. Jones, is it not wonderful?"
 "It is, indeed, most wonderful."

Shorty sat there in his cut and torn clothes, looking sick, and as though something terrible had happened.
 "What has happened you?" asked Dr. Jones.
 "The brandy," whispered Shorty, faintly.
 "What of it?" demanded Dr. Bump.
 "Well, it made me feel awfully queer an' quitsby, an' after you went out I began to grow small again."
 "Great Heavens!" exclaimed Bump. "Is that not wonderful?"
 They all laughed, and admitted that it was.
 "Brandy, then, counteracts the elixir," mused Bump.
 The doctors laughed over the joke they knew Shorty had played on the old fellow, and after chaffing him for some time they left him alone, expressing the hope that he would be more successful the next time.



Up the street they went, the dog yelping and Shorty yelling, while the crowd cheered and the policeman tried in vain to overtake them.

Meanwhile, Shorty and the young fellow at the next door were busily at work.

The first thing they did was to rip open a pair of Shorty's pants, so that the other chap could put them on.

Then they took one of his old coats and ripped that up so that he could partially force himself into it.

It made him look comical, indeed.

This arranged, Shorty prepared to hide under the bed when he heard the doctor coming, leaving the big fellow, whose name was Jimmy Dinks, to act his part.

But they didn't have any too much time to get ready before they heard him coming.

Shorty popped under the bed, and Jimmy, who was quite a large boy, took a seat in a chair and assumed a wild, frightened look.

The old fellow hurried into the room, followed by another doctor.

When he beheld Jimmy, he staggered back, and nearly knocked his friend down stairs.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed.

"What is it?" asked the other doctor.

"Look there!" said he, pointing to Jimmy.

"Who is it?"

"Ah; who are you, sir?" he said.

"I—I used to be Shorty, but—but—doctor, I feel very bad," said Jimmy.

"Great Heavens! See how he has grown!"

"Is it possible?"

"When did it begin, Charles?" asked Bump.

"About an hour ago."

"Only an hour ago! And see how he has outgrown and destroyed his clothes! And see how changed he is in every way."

"I should say so."

"You are my witness, for you saw him only yesterday in his normal condition."

"Yes, I did."

"Ah! I have won the laurel of renown; a name that shall live forever!" said he, with a flourish.

"You certainly have. No one will believe it."

"But they must. Let us go and bring in as many physicians as we can find, and let us all be present while the marvel is going on. Quick, let us away."

Dr. Jones was only anxious to get out, for he smelled a big rat, and feeling sure that there was a joke somewhere, he wanted to have some of his friends enjoy it with him; so in a few minutes the two tricksters were left alone.

Quickly as possible Jimmy got out of Shorty's old clothes, and got into his own.

"Now, then, I'll skip, and let them find you here,"

"All right," said Shorty.

"Oh, what a racket!"

"Won't it make the old cock sick?"

"You bet. But I must steal out, for when they see you they will suspect a job."

"That's so; but you can listen at the scuttle."

"Bet your last dollar I will," and opening the door softly he stole out into the hallway, and then up the ladder leading to the roof.

Presently half a dozen men came up stairs behind Bump, who was puffing like a horse.

He threw open the door and rushed in.

If he was startled before he was more so now.

It was some minutes before he could speak, during which the other doctors gathered around laughing and asking where the miracle was.

"What has happened, Charles?" asked Bump, at length,

But he couldn't understand it to save his neck.

He questioned Shorty over and over again about the matter, but he stuck to it that he began to go down like a pricked bladder soon after he drank the brandy.

"Wonderful—wonderful," he mused. "And so I have got to do it all over again."

"Not with me, Doc," said Shorty.

"What is that you say?"

"No more yeast in me, if you please."

"Don't you dare to thwart me now when I am on the very threshold of success."

"All right," growled Shorty, at the same time concluding in his own mind that he would just skip out of that and take his chances at being caught.

Jimmy Dinks, who had helped work the racket, gave it away to Dr. Jones, and the way the whole lot of them did laugh and go for old Bump, was a caution to sinners.

In fact, the story finally got into the papers, and he never heard the last of it.

But Shorty was not there to bear the blame, for the next day he got his things up on the roof and down through Jimmy's house, and in this way made his escape, greatly to the delight of Aunt Tabby if not of Dr. Bump.

Once more he was free to do as he liked, and in less than a week he had made an engagement to go with a circus.

CHAPTER XII.

It will be remembered that Shorty joined a circus company soon after making his escape from the house of Dr. Bump, but as it would be two weeks before it started, he found time enough on his hands to get into a dozen scrapes at least.

And as the reader has probably learned by this

time, he was just the kind of a chap to improve all such opportunities.

But he kept a good long ways from Dr. Bump's residence, as well as from those of other people with whom he had lived, and had rather curious if not unpleasant relations.

He was boarding at a private house on East Broadway, and every day he was out prowling about the city in quest of fun and adventure, always attracting much attention by his stunted, comical appearance.

His chiefest delight was to loaf around the docks and watch the shipping, and nearly every day he was somewhere about them.

The sailors on board one of the ships that lay at Pier 39, East river, took a great fancy to him, and they finally got him to come on board and get better acquainted.

After several visits he made himself very much at home, and amused the sailors by his songs and dances, and his general inclination for mischief and deviltry.

One day the captain came on deck, and saw a crowd of people gathered on the dock, all gazing up into the rigging of his vessel. What the deuce it all meant, he had no idea, but just then he heard a little, squeaky voice up aloft, and looking up he saw Shorty suspended in mid-air, nearly a hundred feet up, by a rope around his waist.

"Let me down!" yelled Shorty.

The captain took a long look, and then called for his mate.

"Who is that up aloft there?"

"Haag me if I know, sir. Why, it's that little 'Shorty'! How in thunder did he come to get up there, I wonder?"

"Call some of the men."

In a few minutes several of them came.

"How came that little runt up there?"

"Well, sir, some of the men got him to come on board for the fun they got out of him," said the second mate, "and at length he got into all sorts of mischief. I was laying down just abaft the mainmast after dinner and fell asleep, and the little cuss got the paint brush and painted my nose as black as tar, so I strung him up there to punish him."

"Lower him down and put him ashore," said the captain, going below.

The crew came laughing from the fore-castle, where they had been listening to what had taken place; in truth, they had put the joke up on the mate, and got Shorty to play the trick.

The mate unfastened the tackle pull and slowly lowered Shorty to the deck, amid the laughter of the crew, and jeers of those on the dock.

"Now, will you ever paint anybody's nose again?" asked the mate.

"Not if I know it," replied Shorty.

"All right. Now you paddle ashore, and if I ever catch you on board this ship again I will throw you overboard."

"You may, boss, only let me go. Gracious! I was never on such a string afore in my life."

"You'll get one around your neck some day if you don't stop your deviltry. Now git!"

"You bet!" and recovering his hat he waddled down the gang plank, and got ashore with the least possible loss of time.

"You go shoot yourself!" he yelled, as he found himself safely ashore. "Drop on yourself!"

"You'd better not let me drop on you again, my little runt!" cried the mate.

"I'll bet I won't, old black nose. Hye! go'n soak yer tarry tophits!"

He dodged behind a barrel just in time to get out of the way of a stick of wood that the mate threw from the deck of the ship.

"Oh, you just wait till I get you ashore sometime, an' I'll make yer think a hook an' ladder company run over yer!" he yelled.

All this was sport for the spectators, and quite a crowd of boys followed him as he sauntered towards South street.

The truth was, he felt sore over the joke that had been played upon him by the mate, and he began looking around for some means of getting square at the expense of somebody else.

The first person he tackled was an old Irish woman, who kept an applestand on South street. Selecting two nice apples, he put them in his pocket.

"Can yer change a dollar bill?" he asked.

"Faith, I can," said she, going down into her pocket the whole length of her arm after her bag of pennies.

"All right, I'll go an' see 'f I can get one."

"Fat's that ye say?"

"I'll go an' see 'f I can borrow a dollar bill for yer ter change," replied Shorty, turning to go.

"Well, all roight; but where's me money for der apples ye have?"

"That's all right, ole gal, I'm goin' for it."

"Never moind, me foine lad. Go for yer money, an' thin come for yer apples."

"But I'll pay you when I come back."

"Faith, ye will, but ye'll not come back at all—at all."

"Der yer think I'd go back on yer?"

"No, nor come back, aither. Put back them apples."

"Der yer think I'd cheat yer?"

"No, begob, I know ye won't, for I'll not give ye a chance," saying which she seized Shorty by the collar and heels, and tripped him up as she would a milk can.

She shook him head downwards, until the apples dropped from his pocket, and then giving him a toss, she landed him in the gutter.

"There, ye little spalpeen, will ye iver come around bothering a dacint ould lady loike me, that is the mother of tin by's an' gurls, an' the youngest one of the lot wud put an illegant mustard roof on ye quicker'n ye cud say 'scat.'"

Shorty picked himself up out of the mud, and just then a playful New Foundland dog came along, and seizing his hat, he ran away with it at a frolicking gallop.

"Bedad, it sarves yer roight! Be out o' this or I'll call me ould man, who is a policeman on this bate, so he is."

Shorty didn't stop to argue with the old apple woman, but ran after the dog as fast as he could go, cursing his luck generally, and all dogs in particular.

After running five or six blocks, he at last overtook the dog and recovered his hat; but he was too mad to call it square, and he didn't dare to kick him for fear he might turn around and eat him up. He had had all the bad luck he wanted for one day.

But he resolved to get square with that dog, and take some of the playfulness out of him.

"Good dorgy, nice dorgy!" said he, as he patted the big, shaggy fellow on the head.

This brought about a seeming friendship between them, and he walked along, holding him by the strap that was around his neck.

"Oh, won't I make you sick? Nice dorgy, come along, dorgy. Oh, won't I jest make yer wish you'd never seen a feller's hat? Yer bet I will. Come, good dorgy," and he walked along, looking carefully into every ash barrel that he could find standing on the sidewalk.

Presently he found some strong cord, and at the next barrel a couple of old tin coffee pots, that had been thrown away.

"That's all bully! Come, dorgy, I've got something nice for you. Oh, won't we have lots of fun? Come right along."

Taking him into an alleyway, he proceeded to fasten the cords to the old tin pots, after which, he tied them to the dog's tail securely.

"Now, then, the fun commences. I'll make you sicker than I did Chow-Chow. Here!" said he, making believe throw something for the dog to run after.

The dog started, but the rattle of the pots which were tied to his waggon frightened him, and uttering one or two terrible yelps, he darted out of that alleyway like a rocket, the tins hopping and banging at his heels.

Shorty ran laughing out of the alleyway to see the sport.

The dog was tearing down the street as though the devil was after him, and the boys were running after him, yelling like a pack of young Indians.

And such a scattering as there was among the women and timid people generally, while some cried "mad dog!" and ran for their lives.

If that dog wasn't mad, he didn't understand the situation worth a cent; for he had good reasons for being as mad as thunder.

There was a great commotion in the street, and the poor dog was being yelled at and pelted until he stood in danger of losing his own pelt, and to make it all the more lively, a policeman joined in the chase.

Shorty laughed until the tears filled his eyes, and he could scarcely see; but while he stood there, he did not observe that the dog had turned, and was coming towards him as hard as he could run.

But such was the fact; and before he knew it, the frightened creature ran between his legs, taking him off his feet and landing him upon his shaggy back.

Shorty yelled Irish murder, for at first he didn't know what had got him; but he clung to the dog's back like death to a nigger, while he continued his headlong way.

Up the street they went, the dog yelping and Shorty yelling, while the crowd cheered and the policeman tried in vain to overtake them.

Running into one woman, they tripped her up so suddenly, that it would have broken her head had it not been for her waterfall, while everybody who could get out of the way did so, Shorty clinging to his seat, doing his best to coax the dog to stop.

But the dog had no notion of stopping. He was doing his best to get away from Shorty and the tin pans tied to his tail.

However, there was more fun ahead, for in less than half a minute after finding Shorty on his back, he ran across South street and leaped into the water.

Poor Shorty! Under the water he went like a paving-stone, but being a good swimmer, he soon arose to the surface again, while the dog swam to a raft a little way off and managed to climb upon it.

A rope was thrown to Shorty, and he was soon pulled out of the water, dripping and disgusted. Everything seemed to be going back on him that day, and he almost wished that he had drowned.

A crowd gathered, and asked him all sorts of questions, but he was too mad to answer anybody, and seemed to be only anxious to find his hat and to be run through a wringing-machine.

The dog was also got ashore, when the cause of all the trouble was taken from his tail, and he once more became a sensible acting dog.

Only Shorty knew, however, who it was that tied the things to the poor fellow's narrative, and under the circumstances, he didn't feel like bragging much about it.

With a sorry face he retraced the ground over which he had ridden, and tried to find his hat; but

some cove had found it before him and worn it away.

"I think I'll go shoot myself," he growled, as he started for home. "Arn't had no fun ter-day. Ough! how cold I am; wish I had some dry clothes ter put on. Wonder if I hadn't better go back and live wid ole Doc Bump? But I s'pose somebody's given it ter him how I fooled him. No, I guess I'll go home an' go ter bed 'till my harness dries. But what bloody luck I've had ter-day."

He growled and grumbled to himself all the way home, shivering and hatless.

The front door chanced to be open, and he went up to his room without being seen by anybody.

Once out of sight, he proceeded to strip himself, hung his clothes out of the window to dry, and then got into bed to keep warm.

He felt sick.

Even a dog had gotten the best of him, and here he was, dead broke, and no hat to wear.

What should he do?

While reflecting on the roughness of his situation, he covered his head with the sheet, and was soon fast asleep, forgetting his troubles and general bad luck.

He had only slept about an hour, however, when the servant-girl went to his room to do up the work, having just got through with her duties in the kitchen.

She was in no amiable mood that afternoon, and without stopping to think, or even suspecting that Shorty was there, she grabbed the bed clothing, taking him right up with them, and chucked them savagely to the floor.

Now almost anybody would kick at such treatment as this, and anything more than a wooden man would be likely to wake up under the circumstances.

Shorty woke up, and yelled and kicked at the same time, frightening the life half out of the girl, who started and ran towards the door.

"Fat the devil is that, I don't know?" said she.

"Ya—ya—ya! lemme out!" he called, but being covered and almost smothered by the clothing, she could not understand what he said, or make out what the dickens it was anyway.

"Begorra, I think it's that bloody ould cat," said she. "Faith, I'll fix ye for this, so I will," and seizing the broom, she began pounding poor Shorty most unmercifully.

"Ya—ya—ya!" he yelled.

"Oh, I'll give ye ya—ya—ya, an' more nor ye want of it, so I will, ye devil's spalpeen!" and she whaled him with the business end of the broom, which was no joke.

"There, now, see if ye'll larn dacincy an' kape out o' the boarders' beds," said she, catching hold of the clothes and turning him over so that he could escape.

The next instant Shorty, naked as when he was born, with a most woeful mug, came to view. The girl gazed at the apparition, and was struck perfectly dumb.

"What the devil yer doin', yer cussed ole red-mouth?" whined Shorty.

"Howly fiddles! Great Mowses! Fat the devil are ye, onyway?" she cried.

"I'll show yer what I am, yer darn fool! Clear out!" he added, pulling the clothes about him.

"Is that yerself, Mr. Shortness? Well, upon my sowl ter Mowses! Sure I thought it was the cat, so I did," she protested.

"Yes, it was cat—got enough that time," said Shorty, rubbing his head.

"Och, but I'm so sorry."

"Who the devil cares whether you are or not. That don't make it all right."

"Sure, ye were hidden in the clothes. What's ailin' ye that ye are abed this toime of the day? Are ye sick?"

"I should say so. Sick! Why, the beating you gave me would make a cat sick. But I'll get even wid yer, see if I don't."

"Whist! Get about an' dress ye," said she.

"Go ter the devil."

"Whist now, be aisy an' dress ye."

"I can't; my clothes are wet."

"Fat's that? Did ye wet yer clothes?" she asked, with comical earnestness.

"I got bounced inter the river. Go 'way."

"But I want ter make yer bed."

"Well, yer just can't."

"Faith I know how to fix it."

"Fix what?"

"Fix you, faith."

"I think you have fixed me pretty well. Go 'way. I don't want any more of yer foolin'. Git."

"But, sure, I must make the bed."

"I don't want it made."

"Begorra, thin, ye'll have it made, an' if ye give me any of yer saucy gab, I'll toss ye out o' the windy, so I will. Here," said she, pulling one of the cases from the pillow, "get ye inter that if ye have no clothes ter put on."

"Get inter that? Yer crazy."

"I'm not. Here, till I help ye."

"No—no!" he protested.

"Hould yer whist. Put down yer hands, or I'll spank yer till yer nose bleeds," saying which, she pulled the pillow case over his head, and then, turning him over, she pushed him into it entirely out of sight.

"Well, by thunder!" exclaimed poor Shorty.

"Hould yer gab."

"Lemme out!"

"Will I?"

"Lemme out or I'll yell murder!" said he.

"Ye will, hey? Take that, an' that!" said she, spanking him with her big hand. "Now will ye be aisy?"

"I'll kill yer when I get out."

"Ye will? We'll see about that," and pulling up her dress she took off her garter and tied it securely around the neck of the bag in which Shorty lay doubled up.

"Now, an, we'll see if ye'll do so much," and she tumbled him over in the corner.

Shorty kicked and strained, trying to get free, but the pillow case was strong, and he found himself completely imprisoned and wholly unable to move.

"I'll tell the landlady of yer," he said, at length.

"All right, me lad, run down an' tell her now, will ye?" said she, laughing.

"I'll get even with you for this, see if I don't. Lemme out; I'm smothered."

But he was determined not to give it up until he had tried them all.

Finally he opened the door of another room, and here he found an old silk high hat; but it was so large that it would have shut down over his whole head, and rested on his shoulders, had it not rested on his ears first.

"Well," he muttered, "if I can't find anything better I'll make this do."

He placed it upon his head, and started to follow up his hunt. But a more comical picture than he made with that pillow-case shirt, and that big plug hat on his head, was never seen.

The next room he entered he created a sensation. It was occupied by an old maid, and her poodle dog and tabby cat. Shorty saw neither of them until he had got well into the room, and then there came a wild scream from the old maid, a snarl from the cat, and a sharp bark from the poodle.

I'll go shoot myself anyhow, after I've shot that cussed dorg. Golly, I guess this isn't my dorg day; but it's been made hot enough for dorg days. How'll I get out of this I wonder? I know. I'll tell her I was goin' ter get a bath an' got in ter der wrong room; and as fer der hat, I guess it's so bad now that the owner won't know it."

As soon as he got dressed he proceeded to tell Mrs. Stubbs a big cock-and-bull story about how he came to be undressed, and to get into the old maid's room.

"That may be all true, sir; but if I hear any more trouble from you, I shall order you out of my house. Do you hear?"

"Yes'm."

"Well, see that you heed me," said she, going from the room.

But Shorty had a hat, and that night he went out with it, creating lots of fun on account of his com-



The people opened their eyes as Shorty swaggered up and down the room with his hands in his pockets and his hat pulled down over his eyes.

"Divil a onet," said she, proceeding to make up her bed and do the work.

Poor Shorty! this was a piece of the same luck that had followed him all day. What would happen to him next?

He lay curled up in a very uncomfortable position, while the girl kept chaffing him in various ways and laughing at his misfortune. But finally she finished her chamber work, and untied the string which held the prisoner in, and allowed him to escape after she had left the room.

"Now I will go an' shoot myself," said he, finding himself once more at liberty. "No, I won't, I'll shoot her. Was ever a poor devil bounced around as I have been to-day?"

He examined his clothes, and found that they were not yet dry.

What should he do?

"Wonder if I can't find a hat 'round the shanty somewhere; for if my togs get dry I can't go out without a hat," he mused.

He walked around his room for some time, and finally a happy thought struck him.

"Bully!" he exclaimed, and taking his knife, he proceeded to cut a hole in the top of the pillow-case, large enough to allow his head to go through, after which he cut two others for his arms.

This done, he slipped it on over his head, pushed his arms through the other holes and found himself in quite a respectable shirt.

"Now, while my duds are dryin', I'll just take a quiet prow about the house, an' see if I can't scare up a hat somewhere; most any kind'll do better'n none," said he.

Stealing from his chamber he began to investigate the rooms near by, but in none of them did he find a hat.

Shorty started to retreat, but the dog was too quick for him; and before he reached the door he had him by the shin.

Shorty ran, but the dog held on and ran along with him, while the woman seized a poker and followed, all the while yelling "thieves! robbers! police!" at the top of her squeaky lungs.

The landlady and servant-girl came running up stairs to see what the row was all about, and the sight that met their gaze was a curious one. Shorty and the poodle were wrestling near the door of his room, while the old maid was getting in a lick with her poker whenever she could get a chance, and she kept at it until her dog tore the pillow-case from him, when, seeing his nakedness, she turned and ran back to her room, greatly shocked.

"Oh, Mrs. Stubbs, there's a stark naked thief in the house," she said.

"Where?"

"He has just gone into that room over there."

Yes, Shorty had gone into his room, after having shaken off the dog and sent him yipping back to his mistress, and when the landlady opened the door, she found him dancing around the room on one leg, holding the other in both hands.

"What is the meaning of this, sir?" she asked, approaching him savagely.

"I—I give it up, ole gal," said he, making up a horrible face.

"Don't talk that way to me, sir. Where are your clothes, you shameful sight?"

"Well, if you'll clear out a minute, I'll put 'em on an' tell yer all about it," said he.

"Very well, be sure that you do so," and she withdrew from the room.

"Cuss my luck, and hang that dog!" he growled, as he proceeded to get into his clothes, although they were scarcely dry. "This finishes me. Now

ical appearance, and going into a saloon he managed to change it for a shorter and smaller one that fitted him better.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next day or two after the events which happened to Shorty, as recorded in the last chapter, he kept pretty quiet; waiting for his luck to change, he said.

In truth, there was a chance for his luck to change, as the reader will remember, and as it was several days yet before the circus troupe started, he concluded to go slow, although he meant to get square with the servant girl who gave him such a beating, and the old maid's dog who treated him to such a biting.

He had to attend rehearsal twice each day now, for he was going to act as second clown, and the first one was to show him what he had to do and how to do it.

This was a much rougher experience than Shorty had dreamed of.

Dressed in tights he was to follow the boss clown around and assist him with his heavy jokes, although he soon began to realize that he was the victim of the most of the jokes himself.

On their first entrance into the ring, the clown was to catch him up by one leg and throw him whirling head over heels into the sawdust, leaving poor Shorty to take the chance of lighting on his head or his heels.

This being thrown around like a cat, without a cat's ability to always land on his feet, might be exceedingly funny to the people who went to see the show, but Shorty failed to appreciate it, and he said so.

"You be hanged.—Ar'n't you going to get twenty dollars a week for playing?" asked the clown who was practicing with him.

"Yes, but I didn't 'gree ter let you play with me this way, chucking me 'round like an old termater can," growled Shorty.

"The devil you didn't. Well, perhaps you'd like to change places with me, and throw me around the ring."

"Wish I only could," muttered he, shaking his head, and rubbing his back, on which he had fallen a moment before while rehearsing.

"Now you hush your chin. I won't hurt you. It'll do you good to be thrown around this way every night. It'll make you grow."

"Yes, grow sore."

There was a mattress in the room in which they were practicing, and the man would catch him by the ankle and spin him around in the air and let him alight on the mattress in the room, which was to represent the sawdust of the circus ring; but, as before stated, Shorty wasn't always sure of lighting on his feet.

"Oh, we'll make that all right in a little while. Practice makes perfect, and after a bit you won't mind me making a walking cane of you, chucking you around the ring and throwing you on to galloping horses."

"Won't I, though? Don't yer s'pose I care a cuss about my neck, anyhow?"

"Well, it arn't worth much."

"Maybe not, but it's the only one I've got, and I don't want ter lose it."

"Well, all right, I won't hurt it. All you have to do is to brace up and hold yourself well together when I spin you."

"But how the devil can I? Do it slower, an' only whirl me over once."

"All right," said the clown, catching him up and throwing him as he wished.

This was a success, and Shorty could land on his feet every time when not spun around in the air by the giant.

But this did not suit the clown. He wanted to make a big laugh when he first went into the ring, and so, after practicing a while with one whirl, he tried two.

After one or two failures this was successful, and the clown concluded that he could get along all right if he whirled him any number of times.

Well, after many rehearsals, the circus was ready for business. The manager was going to start the season by playing two weeks in New York before starting out traveling.

Shorty was known on the bills as the wonderful dwarf clown, from the Paris amphitheaters, and after getting well up in his business, he began to have bright dreams of the fun that was in store for him, traveling all over the country.

The circus opened to a good house, and when it was time for Shorty and the clown to enter, he trembled just a trifle, not knowing how far he was likely to be thrown.

But he soon found out.

"Here we are again!" shouted the clown, taking Shorty by the leg and spinning him up about half a dozen times.

"Wrong side up," said Shorty.

He *should* have said right side up; but he didn't strike on his feet as he was expected to do, but flat on the seat of his tights, nearly knocking the breath out of him, and so the reply he made was very appropriate, and brought down the house furiously.

This made matters all right, and the two clowns kept the audience on the roar all the evening; for as soon as Shorty recovered from his fall, he was himself again, and chuck full of all sorts of deviltry.

In fact, he was perfectly at home, although he told the clown that he would throw up his engagement if he ever threw him up that way again.

The clowns made one of the greatest features of the show, and during the two weeks that they played in the city the tent was filled every night, and the two got along very well together.

Connected with the circus was a menagerie, consisting of an elephant and other rare animals, and Shorty, who soon became a perfect little tease and torment to the whole company, took great delight in teasing the elephant.

The keeper often told him that he would get hurt some day for his deviltry, but he took no notice of the warning, and would tickle his tail or trunk, or give him an apple with a red pepper in it whenever he got a chance.

The elephant was a solemn old beast, and naturally well-behaved; but the best dispositioned creature in the world couldn't stand all of Shorty's nonsense without getting mad over it. In fact, he almost laughed one day when the keeper caught him at his pranks, and reached for him with the ticklish end of a whip.

But it failed to teach him to keep away from the elephant, and so he watched for a chance to attend to him himself.

One day they were passing along the road from one town to another, where they were going to show, and getting tired of riding, Shorty thought he would get out and walk awhile for a change.

He contrived to get alongside of the elephant, on whose back the keeper was riding, and began to tickle his trunk with a stick. The old fellow had his eye on him, however, and pretending not to be annoyed at him, Shorty took fresh courage and approached nearer.

They were just then passing alongside of a pond, and watching his opportunity, the elephant seized

Shorty with his trunk, lifted him up, and threw him high in the air, over some trees and over into the water.

He landed head first, and went under water like a lump of lead, while several of the company who had seen the performance, jumped out and ran to his assistance.

He was rescued after a while, and put back into his wagon again, wet as a rat, and the life half frightened out of him.

"What is it?" was his first question.

"What is what?" asked the clown.

"Where's der mule?"

"What mule?"

"Why, der mule what raised me?"

All hands laughed heartily at Shorty's idea of what had happened him.

"The mule that raised you into the pond has got a tail on each end."

"Great gosh! I should think he had heels at both ends. Where is he?"

"Want to try it again?"

"I'd like to get hunk."

"You'd better stop fooling with that elephant, or he will kill you next time."

"Oh, was it the hehephant?" he asked, in evident surprise, for his bounce and ducking had so confused him, that he scarcely knew what had befallen him.

"Yes; now see if you can keep away from him."

"You bet," replied he, and he was as good as his word during the remainder of the season.

Well, after going to all the principal cities and towns in the Northern States, when cold weather began to approach, the circus returned to New York to give the closing performances of the season, after which it was to disband until next year.

Shorty was glad enough to get back again, for to tell the truth, he got tired of traveling, and no place in the world seemed so much like home to him as New York did.

He went to his old boarding-house on East Broadway, where he was gladly welcomed back by the landlady and the servant girl who gave him the bouncing mentioned in the last chapter.

But a new sensation awaited him in New York. "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children" had come into existence, and besides doing a great many charitable and good things, it had of course done many foolish ones.

One of the things that the officers of this society had done was to take a great many young boys from the possession of gymnasts who overworked them, and either restore them to their parents or give them to somebody to adopt.

Several of them had been rescued, and now the officers had their attention turned to Shorty, for by this time he and the clown worked so well together that he threw him around in all sorts of ways, and had taught him to do all sorts of dangerous tricks, one of which was riding a horse bare-back at a high speed, dressed as a monkey.

The old duffers of the society regarded him as a child, and his occupation dangerous to life and limb, and so they resolved to take him away from the manager.

This they proceeded to do, although they all said that he was a dwarf, and much older than he looked. The courts, however, gave him into the custody of the society, and once more Shorty became a victim to circumstances.

He was taken to the rooms of the society, and all the old hens and roosters came in to see him, and to decide what should be done with him.

He was very indignant, for he somehow thought that some more experiments were to be tried with him, and perhaps Dr. Bump would again get hold of him.

About twenty old men and women got around to see and question him.

"What is your name?" asked one.

"Shorty," said he, gruffly.

"What?"

"Shorty?" exclaimed several.

"No—no; not your nickname, but your real name."

"All right; Shorty."

"What is your other name?"

"Shorty."

"Have you no other name but that?"

"No, never had."

"Where do your parents live?"

"Give it up."

"What! Have you no parents?"

"Not as I knows on."

"Where did you come from?"

"I was picked up."

"Where?"

"Somewhere down on Long Island; hanged if I know where."

"How old are you?"

"About forty."

"What?"

"Goodness gracious!" they all exclaimed.

"I'll give them all the taffy on a stick they want if they don't drop on themselves," thought Shorty.

"What do you mean by telling us such a story?" asked the president of the society.

"Well, yer wants me ter tell, don't yer?"

"To be sure, but we want you to tell the truth."

"Who's doin' this, anyway?" he asked, with much indignation.

"Be civil, sir. How old are you?"

"I give it up, boss. How should I know?"

"How old was you when found?"

"Don't remember, boss."

"How long ago was it?"

"Oh, ever since I can remember."

"We seem to have a hard case here," suggested one of the company.

"Yes, a very vicious case," said another.

"Made so probably by the bad company he has been in," suggested the president of the society.

"Now you bet your bottom nickle, ole man, that it is a good company; had bully houses all summer. What der you know 'bout circuses, anyhow?"

"You don't understand me, my son," said the good old man, turning away to consult with some of the officers.

"He needs a good moral training," said one of the old ladies.

"Been in training all summer, ole gal," said he.

"What is that, sir? Be careful how you address me!" snapped the woman.

"I don't want to dress yer or undress yer. What yer goin' ter do wid me, say?"

"We shall presently determine."

"Wal, I kinder wish yer'd stir up der big animals, for I want der show over wid."

The goody-good people opened their eyes as Shorty swaggered up and down the room with his hand in his pockets and his hat pulled down over his eyes; he was dressed very rakish, and looked like a Bowery boy boiled down.

It was finally agreed that an old gentleman by the name of Squids should adopt the lad, and give him a good moral training until he was twenty-one years of age, taking it for granted that he was now twelve.

"Come and look at me, little man," said Squids, taking a seat.

Mrs. Squids also sat down to be inspected alongside of her husband.

"Come and take a good look at us," said she.

"How much ter get a peep?" he asked, stepping up in front of them.

"You musn't talk that way to us."

"No, we are your parents now," said the old lady.

"Der d—I you say!"

"What—what! You musn't talk that way; it is very wicked and naughty. You must be a good boy, and not use such bad words."

"Want me ter be one of dem goody-good roosters?" he asked, with a comical leer.

"We want you to be a good boy. We will give you a good home, send you to day and Sunday school, and treat you in all respects just as though you were our own son," said Squids.

"That'll be just old hunky."

"Just what?" asked several.

"Old peaches."

"Peaches?"

"Hunkydory."

"What do you mean?"

"Taffy on a nail."

"There—there, that will do. Come right along home with us, and we will make a nice boy of you."

"Why, I's a nice one now."

"I should say so," sneered two or three.

"Come right along."

"But s'posin' I kick?"

"Do what?"

"Kick."

"Kick who?" asked Squids.

"Why, kick 'bout goin'."

"Oh, well, if you refuse to go I—"

"I will tell you what will happen if you refuse to go with the guardians which we have chosen for you—you will be sent to the Island," said the president, rather sharply.

"That settles it, boss," said Shorty. "Go on, pa an' ma, I'm yer sardine."

"Don't use such slang words."

"All right, I won't; I'll drop on myself."

"What?"

"Why, take a grand tumble."

"Oh, no, you'll do no more circus business."

"What a lot of old flats!" muttered Shorty, as he followed his new parents down into the street.

An old-fashioned carriage, with an old-fashioned pair of horses and driver, stood at the door, and in to it they got and were driven away.

Mr. and Mrs. Squids were good old people, but odd and old-fashioned. They lived in an old-time house, which they owned, down on Rutgers street, and were quite well off in the world, although entirely childless.

Shorty was driven home and shown to his room, after which he was given some dinner and presented to the servants, who were almost speechless with wonder regarding what the old couple wanted to adopt such a comical little runt for.

Shorty concluded to make the best of it, and be as much at home as possible, and wait for a turn in the tide.

But after all he rather liked the old folks, and the servants, and the house.

It was a much better place than he could afford, and he made up his mind that there was heaps of fun to be had in the place.

He got a great many kicks, but here was another instance of being kicked into good luck.

The girls in the kitchen, as well as the coachman, took quite a fancy to him, as did nearly everybody; and in the course of two or three days he began to feel very much at home, although Mrs. Squids bothered him considerably with her moral training.

Mr. Squids bought him a more genteel-looking suit of clothes, and made him look less like a showman and more like the goody-boy boy he had set out to make him.

They took him to church the first Sunday, it being the first time in his life that he had ever been to such a place.

It was almost as good as a show to him, and he rather liked it.

When the services were over, Mrs. Squids took him into Sunday-school and presented him to one of the teachers, into whose class she wished him to be introduced, telling her that he was her adopted son George, and at the same time giving a short outline of his history.

Shorty was introduced to the class, about a dozen boys from eight to twelve years of age, and the teacher tried hard to get him interested.

"Can you read and write?" she asked.

"Well, I can read show bills," he replied.

"Can you write?"

"Not much."

"Have you ever read the Bible?"

The teacher nodded, but looked shocked. As for the other boys, they were convulsed with laughter, and concluded that there was fun ahead for them.

"Won't that be bully!" he exclaimed.

"You must not talk that way, George."

"Oh, George! I say, is this where they made all der angels?"

"Here is where you can learn to be an angel after you die."

"What! can't be no angel 'til yer croak!"

"Hush!"

"Then I pass," said he, taking up his hat and making a motion to go.

"Stop; sit down."

"S'pose I'm going to wait 'til I peg out before I'm an angel! Not for Joseph."

"Sit down and behave yourself."

"All right, I'm mum," said he, sitting down again and looking curiously around the room.

He looked out of the window into the backyard. The leader from the gutter overhead was within easy reach, and a bright idea struck him.

CHAPTER XIII.

It will be remembered that Shorty had been locked into his room by Mr. Squids, his adopted father, for having placed a tack in his chair, and that he had suddenly conceived an idea of escaping down the leader into the back yard for the purpose of having some fun with the servants.

Getting his monkey-dress out of his trunk, he proceeded to get into it without loss of time, and then he began to climb carefully out of the window, and without much difficulty got hold of the leader.

It was a risky thing to do, for had it broken, or he lost his hold, he would have fallen twenty-five or



The old piece had been loaded a long time for the benefit of burglars, and it kicked so hard that it knocked poor Squids over against the servant-girls.

"No; I don't read many stories."

"And have you ever been to Sabbath-school before?"

"First time I was ever in such a show."

"Be more particular in your language. How old are you?"

"Give it up?"

"What?"

"Don't know nuffin' 'bout it. Somebody found me good many years ago."

"What have you been doing all your life?"

"Havin' a good time. Been in der show biz. Was in a circus all summer, until some of them pious ole roosters took me away an' give me to ole Squids," said he.

The other scholars were greatly interested.

"You should not speak so disrespectfully. Mr. and Mrs. Squids are very worthy people, and are working for your good."

"Think I've dropped into a soft thing?"

"I think Heaven has given you a very good home and some good friends, for which you should be very thankful."

"Oh, that's all right. Got a regular pudden' boy?" he asked, whereat the other boys laughed.

"I don't understand you; but one thing is very evident, your moral training has been sadly neglected."

"Guess not. Been wid a 'great moral show' all summer."

"I should think so," said the teacher.

"That's what they advertised it. But that's only to catch suckers an' pious old flats."

"Well, now we will see what we can do for you," said she, glad to change the subject.

"Goin' fer make an angel out of me?"

"I hope so."

"One of dem coves wid wings an' a harp?"

The whole thing interested and amused him very much; but what the dickens it all meant he couldn't for the life of him make out.

He went home after school, and Mr. Squids attempted to make it plain to him, but with only partial success. Shorty concluded that he wasn't the sort of a chap that angels are made out of, and so did old Squids a moment afterwards, when he sat down on a chair, on which his adopted son had placed a carpet tack, ticklish end up.

The way the old fellow did everlastingly git up and paddle out of that was enough to make everybody laugh but himself.

"Did you place that tack there?" he demanded.

"No; you placed it there yourself," said Shorty, as the good old man pulled the tack from the flesh that he used mostly to sit on.

"But did you place it in the chair?"

"No, boss; I never had a tack."

"I believe you tell a lie, for I have been sitting in that chair for the past hour, until I got up to get the Bible to show you, and you certainly must have placed it there," said he, rubbing.

"Honest Injun," said he, holding up his hand.

"I do not believe you; I clearly see that you have to be dealt with severely. I shall lock you in to your chamber, and keep you there the remainder of the day without food."

"I didn't do nuffin', boss."

"Come along with me," said the old man, taking him by the hand, and going from the room.

Shorty begged hard, and protested his innocence, but it was no go. Into the room he was put and the key turned on him.

The first thing he did was to have a good laugh over the affair, and then he began to look around to see what chance there was of having still more fun and killing time.

thirty feet into the yard below. But being very nimble, and the leader strong, he found no difficulty in descending safely.

The servants were at work in the kitchen, and one of the windows was pulled down from the top.

Agile as a real monkey, he leaped upon the lowered sash and began to chatter at a wild rate.

A frantic yell from the frightened servants was the next thing in order.

"Oh, Howly Virgin!" exclaimed the Irish girl, hastily crossing herself.

"Oh—oh!" exclaimed the cook, a fat old colored woman.

"Murther—murther! It's the devil, sure enough."

"Sakes alive, it mus' be the debel. Go 'way, good debel," she added, coaxingly.

"Help—help! send for der police. Mr. Squids—Mr. Squids, come quick, for the love of God! Sura he'll ate us."

Shorty kept on chattering and cutting up all sorts of monkey-shines, and finally jumped down upon the stationary tub, and there began jumping up and down upon all fours.

But the servants waited to see no more.

With yells that would have done credit to wild Indians, they ran up stairs pell-mell, calling for help.

The whole house had been raised by this time, and Mr. and Mrs. Squids met them at the head of the stairs.

"Mercy sakes alive—what is the matter?"

"Oh, Massa Squids, de debel am down in de kitchen fo' shua," said the cook.

"Yes, sur, the very old devil himself. Oh, worra—worra, that iver I should come here an' lose my character," and the girl tossed her arms aloft and seemed to be in great trouble.

"Why, girls, you must be crazy," said Mrs. Squids.

"Oh, you have made a mistake, of course. The idea of there being a devil in my house," said Squids.

"Och, faith, I'm sure of it. Send for the police." "Nonsense! of course you are mistaken," again put in Mr. Squids, although he didn't manifest any particular desire to go down and see for himself.

"Oh, fo' shua," put in Amanda. "Jes' go down an' see fo' yourself."

"Don't you go, Elisha Squids," said his wife.

"Hark! hear him talkin' wid himself!"

They listened, and heard Shorty jumping around and chattering merrily.

Squids turned pale.

"Have ye a gun?" asked the Irish girl.

"Well, I—I—that is, there's an old blunderbuss up in the garret. Why?"

"Get it an' shoot him."

"I go up an' get it," said the cook, starting off.

Squids said nothing, but any person could see by his face that he considered himself in for it.

He didn't care to encounter the devil, neither did he care to show the white feather before his servants. Mrs. Squids tried to argue him out of the idea, but just then the cook returned with the blunderbuss.

"Heah she am, massa; now go down an' shoot de whole head off him," said she.

"Remember, Elisha Squids, if harm comes to you, it is your own fault," said his wife.

"Oh, I guess there's no danger," said he, while his teeth were chattering at the same time.

"Give me it; I'll shoot him," said the spunky Irish girl.

"No—no; I can defend my own house," said Squids, bracing up and starting down the basement stairs, cautiously followed by the females.

"Now, be careful, Elisha, you know you are not used to firearms," said his wife, warningly.

Squids made no reply, but stole cautiously down the stairs into the lower hall.

"Whist! Do ye moind him?"

Just then Shorty discovered the old man creeping along with his blunderbuss, and knew that it meant trouble for him, and so, uttering a wild and defiant chatter, he ran out of the door into the yard.

"There he goes! Shoot him!"

Squids had his old blunderbuss all cocked, and frightened half to death at the sight, he pulled the trigger, and the charge of shot tore around among the dishes and glassware, making sad havoc; but coming nowhere near Shorty.

The old piece had been loaded a long time for the benefit of burglars, and it kicked so hard that it knocked poor Squids over against the servant girls, piling them up on the floor in a mixed and confused group.

Before they had recovered themselves, Shorty skipped behind a tree out of sight.

"Oh, Elisha, see what you have done," moaned Mrs. Squids, pointing to the broken dishes.

"Never mind; it is a good cause. Run up stairs, Amanda, and get me the powder and shot. My blood is up now, and that imp of darkness must die!" replied Squids, with wild heroism.

The cook went to do as bidden.

"Where the devil has he gone? I don't know," asked the Irish girl, peeping out into the backyard.

"Never mind, I'll find him."

"Do be careful, Elisha Squids," pleaded his wife, in whose eyes he had suddenly grown to be a hero.

"Wife, I must eradicate the devil," said he, having grown wonderfully brave since being kicked over on top of his servants.

"Here's the powder, sur," said the Irish girl, as the cook returned. "Now, give him the devil's own taste of it."

"Never fear," said he, proceeding to load up his blunderbuss again.

"Do be careful, Elisha."

"Woman, my blood is up, and it shall never be said that I quailed before the devil."

"That's good and pious, Elisha, but do be careful."

Squids stole cautiously out into the yard.

"Mr. Devil, come forth and be killed," said he.

"Not much," replied Shorty.

"Howly Mother! but he spakes!"

"Give us a rest, old man," said Shorty, peeping out from behind the tree.

Meanwhile the old man had his blunderbuss aimed in Shorty's direction, and was dancing wildly about, trying to get a shot at him.

"Pull down your vest!"

"I'll fix you this time," said he, prancing around, and getting nearer all the time.

"I say, Squidsy, old man, yer wouldn't shoot a feller yer know, would yer?" said Shorty, pulling off the head-piece of his monkey dress and showing his face.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed the old man, dropping his gun.

"What is it?" asked the women folks, stealing out to see what was causing Squid's astonishment.

"Murtherin' fur-downs! It's that devil's whelp, Shorty."

"By gosh! war de likes ob dat eber seen?"

"What is it, Elisha?" asked Mrs. Squids, coming cautiously out.

"Well, I am thunderstruck!" said Squids. "Who is it but our adopted boy, George!"

"Oh, George!" said Shorty, coming out from behind the tree.

"George Squids, I am amazed!" said Mrs. Squids.

"Well, der old man came near mazing me."

"I thought you told me that you had given all your professional traps away."

"Well, what do yer s'pose; that I'm goin' ter sing psalm tunes an' read Sunday-school books all der while?"

"That is what you should do."

"Not much. I'm no pious duffer, I arn't."

"Bejabers, an' I think that's so."

"Fo' de Lord, dat am de wus' boy dat I eber see or hear tell on," said the cook.

How did you get out of your chamber?"

"Slid down der leader."

"Gracious me! I wouldn't have attempted such a thing for ten thousand dollars. Now you may come right up stairs with me. I'll see if I am to be disobeyed in this way," said he, going towards the basement door.

"Oh, Elisha, only think how near you was to havin' blood on your hands."

"Yes, it was a providential escape."

"Give him a good talking to, and see if you can not awaken his moral sentiment."

"Yes, I'll wrestle with him."

In the meantime Shorty had replaced the head-piece of his dress, and was playing all sorts of pranks with the girls.

"Go 'way, ye devil's imp."

"Fo' shua I shall harm ye if ye don't keep 'way from me wid yer nonsense," said the cook, making a dive for him with the broom.

"George Squids, follow me this instant!" said the old man, turning just in time to catch him at his deviltry.

"All right, boss."

"Didn't I tell you not to address me in that way?"

"Well, ye are der boss, ain't yer?"

"But you should have more respect for me."

"Respect! Didn't you try to shoot me?"

"Well, I was mistaken. Come right along."

"Oh, Elisha, I am afraid that you will never succeed in making a good boy of him," said his wife, as they were going up stairs.

"I'll never give it up until I do. It is our duty to save him, and make a useful member of society of him."

The old man took Shorty back to his room, after which he took possession of his monkey-dress, and Squids began to think that he had at last made an impression upon his better nature.

"Now, George, Christmas is near at hand, and if you are a good boy you shall take part in the Sabbath-school exhibition which is to be given by the scholars."

"Goin' tu have a show?" he asked, brightening up.

"Going to have an exhibition, and if you are a good boy you shall take part in it."

"Oh, bully! Monk biz?"

"Oh, no, nothing of the kind."

"Banjo act?"

"Oh, no; singing and speaking."

"That's me. I'll make a hit."

"I don't like to hear you talk that way, George."

"Oh, George, goin' ter have a show!" he exclaimed, walking up and down the room.

"Yes, a good, moral exhibition; not such as circus people give."

"When does it come off?"

"Next week; and each member of the Sunday-school will receive a handsome present."

"Bully for the goody-good boys!"

"You must not speak in that way, George; it is a serious thing."

"What is der show? Serious shows don't pay. We only come der moral dodge on 'em ter git in dem pious old duffers what wouldn't go if we didn't call it a great moral show."

"I don't wish to have you talk that way, and I have told you so often. Now remember what I have said, and see what a good boy you can be," said Squids, going from the room.

"Well, dat's putty good fun, but the old duffer's got my monk-dress," mused Shorty, throwing himself upon the bed. "I wonder who'll get me next? If dere ever was a cove bounced around in this world, I think I'm dat cove. But I'll have some fun at that little piety show, or my name isn't Jawge," he said, laughing.

Shorty had only been to Sunday-school a few times, but he had made his mark.

The boys regarded him as a comical curiosity, while the old people looked upon him as a hard case, and poor material out of which to make a good Sunday-school scholar.

By hook or crook he was resolved on having some fun at that exhibition, and as he had already got pretty well acquainted with several of the most mischievous boys connected with the school, he had little or no difficulty in getting them to assist him.

The exhibition was to be about what all of such affairs are, and Shorty was put down for a recitation.

He spoke a little piece in very good style at rehearsal, all the while behaving himself first-rate. In fact, he was doing so well that his adopted parents began to have great hopes of him.

Well, the night of the affair arrived at length, and the church was filled in every part.

Part after part was taken according to the printed programme, and finally the superintendent, who was acting as stage manager, came out and announced:

"A recitation by Master George Squids."

He had hardly got off on the opposite side before Shorty, all blacked up, came waddling on with a chair and banjo.

What the dickens it meant only a few knew, although they were destined to find out soon.

"Good ebenin', white folks. Thought I'd jus' come out heah an' gub yer a little pick on der banjo," said he.

The boys and young folks laughed heartily, but the old people looked at each other in amazement. Shorty struck up an air which instantly convinced them that he knew his business.

"Way down in the land of Egypt,

Hoe corn, shuck corn,

Dar was a young chap an' his name was Joseph.

Hoe corn, shuck corn, Pharaoh.

Mrs. Pharaoh she got mashed on Joe,

Hoe corn, shuck corn,

But de good boy he say "Not for Joe,"

Hoe corn, shuck corn, Pharaoh."

"Stop—stop!" shouted several of the old folks, who were terribly scandalized.

"Go ahead!" cried the young people, and in a few moments there was great confusion in every part of the church.

The superintendent stood behind the curtain and tried to coax Shorty off.

"All right, boss, I'll fix 'em," said he, and instantly changing his tune he began playing "Old Hundred," and so well did he execute it, that he charmed even his enemies.

After he had got them quieted down, he hit out once more on the tune he had started with.

But they wouldn't have it, and Shorty was finally obliged to give it up and retire.

"How dare you, sir?" cried the superintendent.

"What's der matter wid yer?"

"How dare you go on and give such a ribald song?"

"What's der matter wid dat song?"

"Matter enough, I should say."

"Well, arn't this a moral show?"

"Why, to be sure it is."

"Well, didn't you tell us all about Joe last Sunday? Wern't he a nice cove? What's der harm of singing Bible stories? What's der matter wid you anyway?"

The superintendent found his match, and got away from him as quickly as possible, while Shorty went and washed up.

By the time he had got dressed his Sunday-school teacher and Mrs. Squids came in behind the curtain to remonstrate with him.

"Oh, George, how could you," said Mrs. Squids.

"Wan't that a good song?"

"George, you are a very bad boy, and to punish you for such conduct, you will receive none of the presents on the Christmas tree down stairs," said his teacher.

"Oh, dat be blowed! Don't want none of yer bloody ole presents anyhow; some piety book or a little candy, I s'pose."

"Oh, what a shocking bad boy you are," and they flaunted out into the audience again, leaving Shorty to receive the congratulations of those mischievous boys who had stood in with him on the banjo racket.

"Now, coves, I've got another racket dat dere's lots of fun inter; will yer help me work it?" he asked.

"Of course we will," they replied.

"Can we get in down stairs?"

"I guess so," said Tom Peters. "Why?"

"Well, I was down there ter night before der show commenced an' see der Christmas tree. The presents are all hanging on der limbs wid der names on 'em. Now let's go down an' change these names, an' yer'll see gobs of fun when der show is over."

"Good enough. Come along."

Shorty attracted a great deal of attention as he walked down the aisle, followed by his friends.

Without any trouble they made their way into the church vestry and at once began their mischief, and a long time before the exhibition was over up stairs they had everything dead to rights.

This done they stole back into the church again, and with innocent-looking faces waited for that part of the entertainment to close.

Then the crowd surged into the vestry, and everyone was eager to find out what he or she was going to get from the Christmas tree.

Finally the superintendent took his place by the side of the tree, and after making a little speech, congratulating the Sunday-school and its teachers, he announced that the gifts hanging on the tree would now be given out, and he would request those whose names he should read from the tags attached to the gifts, to come forward and receive them.

Then he began, calling first the name of a little girl about six years old, and handing her a copy of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, almost too big for her to carry.

Then he called the name of Adelaide Strouse, and a young lady about eighteen years of age came up and received a doll.

A boy about sixteen years of age was the next one called, and he also received a doll.

This provoked considerable merriment, although the superintendent was so busy that he failed to discover anything wrong.

Then a young miss was called and presented with a pair of men's skates.

She then returned to her seat, blushing like a rooster's comb, after which a little girl was called, and given a walking cane large enough to kill a cow with.

This set everybody to laughing, and one of the deacons ventured to ask if there wasn't something wrong in the distribution of gifts.

"Well, brother Jump, I'm not responsible for that, I simply read off the names that I find attached to the gifts, as the committee of ladies left them."

Shorty and his friends were enjoying the fun immensely.

An old maid was called up and given a nice rubber nursing bottle, carefully done up in a paper.

A young fellow was presented with an A, B, C primer, and still another with a doll's carriage, and with every present a loud laugh was raised, while those who received them were indignant.

Finally the superintendent dropped to it, and requested the ladies who had arranged the tree to step forward and explain.

That was an easy thing to demand, but a hard thing to explain.

They consulted over the matter for some time, and finally concluded that somebody had played them a trick.

"My friends," said the superintendent, "as near as we can find out, somebody has played a shabby trick upon us, and changed the tags attached to the gifts. It is thought best to have what articles have been given out returned again, and let the tree be rearranged for to-morrow night."

"Shame—shame!" cried several.

"Yes, friends, it is a shame, and if I was only as sure as I think I am, regarding the culprit, I would bring him right up to the platform before you!"

Shorty drew himself down in his seat.

"But we will have things all arranged for to-morrow night, and you can all come here and get your gifts, as they were intended for you."

This being the best that could be done under the circumstances, the audience had only to get up and go home, greatly disappointed, and only wishing they could lay hands on the mischievous rascals.

Shorty looked uncommonly honest as he started for home with Mr. and Mrs. Squid.

"I am very sorry, George, that you should have so far forgotten my good teaching and example, as to do what you did to-night," said Squid.

"Well, don't you see, I thought as how it war a Bible show," whined Shorty.

"Ah, poor boy, your lack of early training is sadly apparent."

"Who's a parent?"

"Stop such foolishness. But in spite of all that you did through ignorance, I can forgive it, knowing that you had nothing to do with the despicable trick of changing the names on the gifts."

"Why, of course you know I wouldn't do such a mean thing as that," said he.

"No; bad as you are, through the lack of moral training, I cannot believe you would be guilty of such a piece of business."

"Oh, but it was bully fun, though."

"You shouldn't see anything to laugh at in such an affair, George."

"How's a cove goin' ter help it?"

"Don't talk with him, Elisha," said his wife, who by this time had pretty thoroughly dropped on Shorty, and took less and less stock in him every day.

But Shorty didn't care a rap whether she took stock in him or not. He only wished that he could make them so sick that they would drop him like a hot potato.

The news of the joke that somebody had played with the Christmas tree spread all over the neighborhood, and even got into the papers, and the next night there was a tremendous crowd there to see the gifts distributed.

But everything went off smoothly, and everybody was delighted, even to Shorty, who received a new pair of skates that Mr. Squids had hung there for him.

"Hallo, Shorty," said somebody, in a whisper, as he was waddling down the aisle with his prize.

"Why, hallo, sergeant," he said, catching his old friend Sergeant Polly by the hand.

"Come right here, Shorty, and tell me all about yourself," said he.

"Why, I haven't got time, sergeant," said he, taking a seat beside him.

"What the blazes are you doing here?"

"Me? Oh, I'm a pious cuss now-a-days."

"Well, you do look pious, that's a fact. How come you on this lay?"

"They're trying to make a good boy out of me."

"And how are they succeeding?"

"Oh, bully. Did you hear of the racket here last night?" he asked, in a whisper.

"About the Christmas tree?"

"Yes."

"That's mine," said he, proudly. "I tried ter give 'em a banjo act, all about Joseph and Pharaoh, but they kicked, and said it wasn't in order."

"Well, I should say so. But tell me how the devil did you get in here anyway? The last I heard of you, you was traveling with a circus."

"So I did, an' had a bully time. But some sort of a society took me away from it and gave me to an old duffer to adopt."

"And so you are an adopted child, eh?"

"Yes, and my name is George—pretty George."

"Well, how do you like it?"

"Not a cent's worth. It's awful dull. I say, sergeant, what precinct are you in now?"

"The Thirtieth."

"Good enough. I'll be down ter see yer to-morrow."

"All right. I shall be pleased to see you."

"Good-night. I must go back to my pa and ma now," saying which he got up and waddled down the aisle to where Mr. and Mrs. Squids sat.

CHAPTER XIV.

It will be remembered that Shorty met his old friend, Sergeant Polly, at the church, and that they had an appointment for the next day.

According to promise, Shorty was at the station-house on time.

The sergeant was at the desk.

"Hallo, Shorty!" he exclaimed, looking up from his writing.

"Hallo, serge, old man! how is it?"

"Oh, fine. How is it with you this morning?"

"Downy," said he, going around behind the desk, and taking a seat.

"Well, you look like a downy cove, that's a fact," replied the sergeant, looking over him from head to foot.

The fact was that Shorty looked but little like the rakish cove we have lately seen him, for Mr. Squid, his guardian, in attempting to make a Sunday-school boy of him, had removed his rakishly-cut clothing that distinguished him while with the circus company, and dressed him in a more modest and boyish-looking costume.

"Who bought you this rig?"

"Old Squids?"

"Who is old Squids?"

"Why, der old pious sharp that's got me."

"Well, you certainly look a great deal more like a Sunday-school boy than you did before he got hold of you," said the sergeant, laughing.

"But I don't feel any more like one," replied Shorty.

He proceeded to give his friend a full account of all that had happened him since last they met, and in Shorty's way of telling it, he made out a decidedly interesting story.

"And what are you going to do now?" asked the sergeant, as he finished.

"I give it up, serge," said Shorty, quickly.

"But what is Squids going to do with you?"

"Cussed if I know! Says he's goin' for ter fix up my soul, or something like that, an' make a good boy of me."

The sergeant laughed heartily.

"Why, Shorty, old boy—"

"George, if you please, sergeant, George Squids," interrupted Shorty, with mock seriousness.

"All right. But what I was about to say was, that your adventures would make a laughable book."

"I'm going to make a book of 'em some day."

"Good idea. But you had better wait until you get through before you publish it."

"Get through! Great jimjams! I'll be dead when I get through. But, I say, sergeant, I wonder what'll become of me next. First, old Bump gets me, and tries to make me grow; then this old tune-hauler gets me, and tries ter ram me full o' piety an' such kind o' pap; I wonder who'll get me next?"

"Some medical college, maybe. But as near as I can find out by what you say, you are legally given to these people by the 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children,' and he can probably hold you."

"Children!" sneered Shorty. "Arn't I a hearty child! Oh, my!"

"How old do you think you are, Shorty?"

"I dunno. Them old cruelty duffers said as how I was fifteen."

"I think you're more. But I don't see what you are going to do about it, unless you submit with grace, and let them make an angel of you."

"Bah! wouldn't I make a fine-looking angel? Besides, I can't play on der harp for a cent. No, give me my banjo an' a show life, an' I'll let der other chaps do der wing flappin'."

The officer laughed at Shorty's earnestness.

"Now, how'll I do?"

"Well, I hardly know. Do they love you much?"

"Guess they haven't got 'em very bad."

"But they are doing this as a sort of pious duty, I suppose."

"I guess so. Der old man says he's going for ter wear me in his crown when he croaks!" And Shorty laughed, and kicked his bantam legs in wild delight.

"Nice jewel you'd make, Shorty."

"Wouldn't I?" And again they both laughed.

"Well, the only thing I can see for you to do, is to make them sick of their bargain."

"How?"

"Well, make it so warm around home that they won't weep much if you skip out."

"I guess the old gal wouldn't muss up many clothes wid tears if I should never come back. Yer see, she hasn't got der pious as bad as der old man has."

"Well, if you ever get away, come to me."

"You bet. I say, serge, why don't you adopt me?"

"I couldn't do that, because you have already been given to these people."

"But why not claim that I am your long lost brother, or something like that?" he asked, earnestly.

The sergeant laughed heartily at the idea.

"What der yer say, serge?"

"I'm afraid it wouldn't work."

"Yer long lost twin—anything?"

"No; you go back home and make them love you pretty well first, and then come and see me again by-and-by."

"Well, all right. If you help me out of this box, I'll stick to you like wax."

"That's better than you did before."

"Well, them coves fooled me."

"Yes, and made all the money. But never mind. Go back and do as I have told you, and come here once in a while and report progress."

"All right, serge; I'll do it. Why, do you know, they're actually trying to make me learn to read and write!" he added, indignantly.

"Well, that's all right. That won't harm you. How are you fixed?"

"Oh, I've got about a hundred left yet."

"That's good; keep hold of it."

"You bet. Don't none of my stamps go ter buy tooth-brushes for der heathen."

Having finished his visit to Sergeant Polly, he started out to see the sights. He bought him a nice little banjo, and a few other things, including some cigars, and then returned home just about the time he should have come from school.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Squids were about, and he got his bundle up into his room without being seen, after which he went down stairs for lunch.

"Arrah, here comes the devil's spalpeen," said the Irish girl, Nora, as he entered the kitchen.

The cook looked up with a broad grin.

"Nora, you shouldn't talk that way about a lamb," said Shorty, looking very sober.

"Lamb! Hoot! a foine lamb ye are, thin. Ther devil's lamb, I guess."

"Didn't I give a nice little Sunday-school recitation, Christmas eve?"

"Och, faith I hearn tell about that," she said, laughing heartily. "Recited a pice on the banjo."

"On de banjo, honey?" asked the cook.

"Shure, wasn't the grocer's boy tellin' us all about it ther day beyant?"

"Oh, yas. War dat Shorty dat he say?"

"Sure it was."

"Do you play de banjo, honey?" asked the old fat wench, turning to Shorty.

"Of course I do; that's my harp."

"Yah, an' dat am de bess harp ob 'em all. Whar you keep dat banjo, chile?"

"You'll give it away."

"Oh, no; fo' shual!"

"Well, Nora will."

"Fat the devil wud I give away yer ould tinklin' machine for?"

"You'll tell the Squids where I keep it."

"Divil a wanst will I!"

"Well, all right. Where are they now?"

"Gone somewhere about church business, an' won't be back 'til three o'clock."

"Won't yer leef me see dat banjo, chile?" asked the cook, with considerable pathos; for, like all Southern dorkies, she worshiped the instrument.

"All right; get me something to eat, an' I'll bring her down, for I s'pose old Sleek is up stairs."

"Shure I think he is."

"Well, hurry up with my grub, 'mundu,' an' I'll touch her up for you."

"Oh, chile, de bess in de house amn't good 'nough fo' yer," said the old woman, flying about, and getting him some grub.

After hiding some of it under his vest, he went up to his room for the banjo.

In doing so he had to pass the door of Mr. Sleek, a very pious old cove, who was spending a few weeks with the family.

He was a minister without a church, which was bully for some church, but he was waiting in the hope of getting a pulpit to pound, and had got hold of a "pudding" in receiving an invitation from Mr. Squids to make his house his home until he got settled.

He had taken it upon himself to say awful nice things to Shorty, and to tell him what he must do in order to be an angel, and Shorty took a great dislike to him, feeling at heart that he was an old fraud, and no better than any body else.

Obtaining the banjo, he went down stairs and began to tune it up before the servants. Amanda nearly went wild over it.

"Oh, chile, dat make me feel so good!" said she, as he struck a chord.

"Well, what will yer have, gals?" he asked, after getting all ready.

"Oh, anyfing, chile, anyfing."

Shorty started the *Charlestown gals*.

The instrument was a fine one, and the way he did ring out that good old tune was a caution to catgut.

The old woman stood it as long as she could, and then began to dance, and to throw her arms about in the wildest manner imaginable.

"Oh, honey! Dat am so good! Bar down!" she exclaimed, meaning that he should play harder.

After allowing her to dance for five or six minutes, during which Nora stood looking on with a half-pleased, half-disgusted look, he suddenly changed the tune to *St. Patrick's Day*.

Then the Irish girl's face began to brighten.

"Whoop! That's the daisy! That's a tune as duz yer machine honor. Whoop!" she yelled, and dropping her broom she began a breakdown that would have done honor to Donnybrook fair.

"Go it, old gal!" said Shorty.

"Whoop! That's fat gives a girl's feelins ease. Whoop!" she yelled again, as she brought her big feet down with a finishing whack.

"Good for you."

"Oh, fuss class," put in Amanda.

"Shure, that's worth a dozen of yer ould nagur tunes."

"Hain't got nuffin' fo' to say 'bout nigger tunes," put in the old woman, indignantly.

"Shure, there arn't the lavins of an Irish tune in them."

"Dey is good 'nough fo' me. Play some mo', ehile," she added, turning to Shorty.

Then he gave her some "Essence of Old Virginia," and the old gal went for it as though not entirely a stranger to its eccentric bouncings.

"Oh, see me," she said, "Easy dar, honey; easy, or you'll sprain de ole lady's back."

The way she was heaving her big feet and fat legs around was a caution to corns and potato bugs.

Shorty had often seen the "Essence" done on the stage by funny negro delineators, but never in his life had he seen anything half so funny as the old cook was doing.

He laughed until he could hardly play.

"Oh, held on dar, honey!" she exclaimed, at last, stopping suddenly.

"What's der matter?"

"Oh, chile, de old lady hab got a crick in her back. Hain't danced dat yer breakdown fo' in twenty ye'r."

"Faith, I think a dance loike that, if ye call it a dance, wud put a crick in the back of a clothes-horse," suggested Nora, laughing.

"Now, don't you give it away, an' I'll play for yer some oder time, when der old duffer is out."

"All right, honey."

"Faith we moight have a parthy here some noight, when the folks was away," said Nora.

"So we can, honey," put in the cook.

"Good enough; I'm your porridge pot," said Shorty, going back to his room.

By this little piece of busines, Shorty made himself solid with the servants, who had, up to this time, disliked him for the tricks he had played upon them.

Going into his room and closing the door, he concluded to take his afternoon's school in practicing upon his new banjo, and so at it he went.

Lighting a cigar, he took a chair and began to knock some lively fun out of the "machine," as Nora called it.

The melody caught the ear of Rev. Sleek.

He opened his door and listened.

It was that instrument of the devil that had brought such a scandal upon the Sabbath-school exhibition.

The good man sighed.

The music was very enchanting, but still he felt it his duty to sigh.

It was the pious fashion to sigh when anything livelier than a double-bass fiddle was agitated.

He felt that he should go in and wrestle with Shorty; tell him that he was going headlong down to the infernal bow-wows—tell him that such music made the devil dance with joy.

Shorty was making rollicking melody of "Hye, Jimalong—Jimalong Josey," and did not hear the rap upon his door. He rapped again, with no better success, so he opened the door and looked in.

What a sight met his gaze! There sat Shorty, cocked up cross-legged in a chair, completely wreathed in tobacco smoke, ripping away at his banjo, and looking happy enough to fly.

He paused as he saw Sleek open the door.

"Hallo, Sleeky, old boy! Walk in. Plant yerself in dat chair, an' make yerself at home," said he.

"Oh, George!" exclaimed Sleek, rolling up his eyes in pious horror.

"Puty George! Come in, an' I'll give yer a bust on my new banjo."

"Oh—oh!" groaned Sleek.

"Arn't she a beauty?"

"Oh, George!" he moaned, clasping his hands with pious fervor, and looking dreadfully shocked.

"I say, what's der matter wid you, anyway? Got der bellyache?" asked Shorty.

"Oh, George, I have got the heartache!" said the dear, good man, shaking his head solemnly.

"Well, why don't yer go out an' git a cocktail; brandy cocktails are bully for heartache."

"Don't speak so, George, my son."

"Yer son! Not much. But maybe yer don't want ter be seen going inter no gin dive. All right! That's biz. I know how it is. Mustn't give yerself away, of course. That's all right. I'm fly. I'll help yer out. Got some bully brandy here, an' a snootful of it'll knock that heartache of yourn all galley west. Have some?"

"George! I am astonished!"

"Oh, that's nothing! I only keep a little of the best for sickness, you know," said Shorty, looking up, and winking at the astonished Sleek.

"I am shocked!"

"Jimminy crick! What lots of things yer got der matter wid yer, hain't yer? but a snoot-full of dat brandy'll fix you all right."

"How you do run on," said he, but his eye did not fail to take in that bottle of brandy, and Shorty's did not fail to notice it.

"Oh, I arn't much of a runner."

"Where did you get that instrument?"

"Bought it."

"For what, unhappy boy?"

"Why, ter practice on, jess 'cause I was unhap-py."

"Alas! You should be thinking of better things."

"Better things! Say, what der you know 'bout banjos, anyway? Dat's a bully banjo."

"I mean you should turn your thoughts above."

"Oh, dere yer go on yer bloomin' angel business again. Say, give us a rest, won't yer? Wipe off yer chin, an' button up yer lip," said he, with much indignation, at the same time starting to play "Old Uncle Ned."

"George, you are a very bad boy."

"Well, I don't make b'lieve I'm good, anyway:

"And there was an old darkey
And his name was Uncle Ned,
And he died long ago—long ago,
And he hadn't much of a crop of mattress material on the top of his cranium,
A place where the wool ought to grow.
Then lay down the agricultural instruments,
Hang up the fifty cent fiddle and the bow,
For there's no more sweating and swearing for poor Uncle Edward;
He's gone where the good darkies go."

"Stop, George, stop, I say," said Sleek.

"Have something else? Know I didn't sing it jess as it's written, but I wanted ter please yer."

"Well, if you wish to please me, George, you will throw that wicked instrument aside, and never play on it again."

"Oh, you go hang yourself."

"Don't you know that it is dreadful wicked to act as you do?"

"No; I can do a bully banjo act, and if it wasn't for a lot of old duffers I could get an engagement right away, for lots of soap."

"Lots of what?"

"Soap."

"Gracious goodness!" protested Sleek, holding up his hands in horror.

"Tell me dat I act wicked. Why, I've been called out four times in my monk and banjo act."

"I don't understand you. I only wish to tell you that it is very wrong to smoke, drink, and make use of such language as you do. Where do you expect to go to?"

"When?"

"When you die."

"When I croak?"

"When you die."

"When I pass in my chips?"

"Don't you understand me?"

"Yes; when I peg out. Well, I s'pect they'll bounce me out to Greenwood or somewhere; but I've no notion of croaking yet, old man; I'm a tough one, I am."

"I should say so. But you'll go to perdition if you keep on this way."

"Where's perdition? Good show town?" he asked, letting out a mouthful of smoke.

"Oh, my boy, I'm sorry for you; I shall return to my room and pray for you."

"Well, that won't hurt me any."

"I trust it will do you good."

"I wish you'd just look in the glass when yer do-in' it; I'll bet it'll make you laugh."

"Hye, jimalong—jimalong, Josy,

Hye, jimalong—jimalong, Joe."

he sang, as the disgusted minister left the room.

"Can't play any of his pious roots on me," he muttered, as he was left alone.

He kept on playing for an hour or so, and then went down stairs to see how the land lay.

The old folks had not yet returned, and after having some fun with the cook and Nora, he returned again to his beloved banjo.

As he came softly up stairs he espied old Sleek in his room, and at once suspected that he was after his bottle of brandy.

So he crept along softly and caught him with it to his mouth.

"Hallo, old man! Curing yer heartache?" he asked, suddenly.

"Oh—oh, yes, that is, I—I have a hollow tooth that troubles me, and I was just putting some of the liquor into it," stammered Sleek, blushing deeply.

"Oh, that's it, eh? Well, by thunder, it must be a cussed big tooth, for it has taken half of the bottle to fill it," said Shorty, taking it up.

"Well, I—I—you see I spilled some of it."

"Oh, well, that's all right. I guess I'll spill some too," said he, tipping the bottle up to his mouth, and taking a drink.

Then he took up his banjo and began to play. The reverend old fraud felt so foolish that he hardly knew which way to turn, and he said, as Shorty kept on playing, quite unconcernedly:

"Please don't say anything about it to Brother and Sister Squids."

"Oh, I'll never give it away, old man, if you'll take a tumble, and say nothing about me."

"Very well, I will remember."

"An' no more gospel whangin' at me?"

"No."

"All right. Now we understand each other. All right. Take another drink."

"Well, really, I—"

"Oh, brace up."

"But it's against my principles, George."

"Well, fill up yer holler tooth, then. See?"

The old hypocrite grinned like a monkey, and had the cheek to take another drink; in fact, the first one was beginning to tell upon him, for he had taken a big horn.

"Have a cig?" asked Shorty, after the drink.

"No, I never smoke, George."

"But it's bully for holler teeth; I've got ten, an' they keep me smokin' all the time. Try one; it will kill the brandy on yer breath."

Reluctantly he took one and lighted it. He was beginning to feel first-rate by this time.

"You play that banjo remarkably well, George," said he, taking a seat.

"Oh, I'm a cat-gut teaser, I am," said Shorty, leading off with Shoo Fly.

"And there is—hic!—great beauty in the—hic!—

melody; great inducements to dance, as it were. It somehow agitates the muscles of the body and sets them in unison with its fascinating time."

"You bet," replied Shorty, ripping out the tune. "A person can hardly resist it," said he, tapping the time with his foot.

The brandy was working.

All at once he leaped to his feet and began to dance like the mischief, putting it down the best he could, and doing the best he could also to keep from tumbling over.

"Go it, old man! Go it, brother Sleek!" said Shorty, hardly able to contain himself.

It was a picture for a comic artist. The change in the hypocritical rascal was very great.

All evidence of his pious calling were gone; he was drunk as a boiled owl, and with a cigar in his mouth, was trying to dance "Shoo Fly."

"Go it, old man," yelled Shorty.

"Hey—hey; whoop—whoop!" he replied, slamming around like a hog in a garret.

Just at that moment the door opened, and Mr. and Mrs. Squids appeared upon the scene.

Talk about being thunderstruck! Don't ever mention being dumbfounded.

"Heaven save us! What does this mean?" demanded Mr. Squids, more in sorrow than in anger.

"Brother Sleek, what is the meaning of this?" asked Mrs. Squids.

Brother Sleek didn't appear to have anything to say. He stood holding on to the bed-post, and trying to balance himself and look sober, but it was a failure. He looked drunk, and acted drunk, and hadn't a word to say.

"George, what have you to say?"

"Nothin', only it's bully good fun," replied Shorty, putting away his banjo.

"Oh, Brother Sleek, can you explain all this?"

"Oser music, Brudder Squids—nussin' only zer music, sister—hic! Allus 'fects me this way," replied the tipsy brother.

"But you are drunk, Brother Sleek."

"Oh, no, nussin' but er music; 'fects my nerves," said he, forgetting himself, and taking a pull at his cigar.

"But you are smoking, sir."

"Oh, ah!" he exclaimed, trying to whirl around to hide it.

But in doing this he got his legs tangled up and tumbled over upon the floor, driving the cigar half way down his throat.

"Mercy—mercy!" screamed Mrs. Squids.

"Brace up, old man," said Shorty, getting hold of him.

With the assistance of Mr. Squids he was taken to his room and put to bed, and Shorty got out of the way double quick, to avoid questions.

He made his way to the kitchen and told the girls all about it, after which he skipped out, and went over to the station-house to tell Sergeant Polly.

But what a sensation it created in that pious and peaceful home!

CHAPTER XV.

THE sensation that Shorty created in the house of Mr. Squids, his adopted father, in managing to get the Rev. Mr. Sleek drunk and have him smoking and dancing "Shoo Fly," just as Mr. and Mrs. Squids came into the room, will be remembered.

It will be also remembered that he was too drunk to give any account of himself, and was put to bed, while Shorty locked up his banjo and started to get away to avoid questions.

But the question was of course brought up at the supper table, and Shorty was put through a course of sprouts by the outraged host who had taken the Rev. Sleek to his house, where he could have a good home free of cost, until he could find a church foolish enough to give him a job.

"George," began Mr. Squids, sternly, "what made you go away and stay so long?"

"Well, yer see, I didn't know but yer kinder wanted to have a little quiet whack at the dominie without my being 'round," he replied, honestly.

"How did such a disgraceful state of affairs come about? What began it?"

"Well, yer see, I had a sprained knee an' I bought some brandy for it. It was in my room, an' the old duffer got a whack at it."

"Why, George Squids!" exclaimed Mrs. Squids, "how can you talk so? I am shocked and astonished."

"Wal, can't a cove tell the truth?"

"Cove—cove! How often must I tell you to avoid using such slang?"

"Wal, what's a chap goin' for ter do, anyhow? Bust my bugle, if I know how ter please you," growled Shorty.

"Be a good boy. Now tell us more about Mr. Sleek."

"Wal, der ole duffer, he smelt my brandy, an' I found him going through it like a dose of salts. An' der old snoozer, he tried to play a hollow tooth on me."

"But where did you get that vulgar banjo?" asked Mrs. Squids.

"Vulgar? Der arn't nuffin' the matter wid dat banjo."

"But how came you possessed of it after my forbidding you to do so?"

"I bought it to have a little fun."

"Fun, indeed!"

"An' yer see when I caught Sleeky at my bits, I didn't say nuffin', an' he set down ter hear me play, an' 'Shoo Fly' got away wid him."

"Gracious goodness, what a disgrace!" said Mr. Squids.

"Disgrace? I should say so. Why, he can't dance 'Shoo Fly' for sour milk."
 "I wasn't speaking of that."
 "But I was. Why, I've seen a pig as could dance 'Shoo Fly' better'n he can. Oh, he's a big duffer," said Shorty, manifesting much disgust for the minister's dancing.
 "Georgel!"
 "Oh, George."
 "Wal, it's truer'n his preachin' anyway."
 "And he was smoking a vile cigar, too."
 "Yes, he smokes regular old stinkers," put in Shorty, not thinking that she had reference to all cigars as being vile.
 "George, be more choice in your language."
 "What a sad affair," moaned Mr. Squids.
 "Yes; if I couldn't dance better'n he can I'd go shoot myself."
 "A minister of the gospel too."

"Well, we shall see what he has to say for himself."
 "But in this they were mistaken, for the Rev. Dr. Sleek folded up his carpet-bag early next morning and softly stole away without so much as saying good-by.
 The fact was, he had given himself away so completely that he didn't have the cheek to stay and try to explain.
 Shorty was sent to school, but beyond furnishing fun for the other scholars, and getting flogged two or three times a day for his deviltry, he didn't amount to much.
 There was too much mischief in his head to leave room for any other learning, and so Mr. and Mrs. Squids began to despond.
 Finally the teacher told them that it was useless; that she could do nothing with him, and they must take him away.

graduated from his school good scholars and polite, gentlemanly boys, came to him with bad reputations and no education. Some of them have been so bad that they would not be permitted to attend the ordinary public schools. Professor Bang has a method of training entirely his own, and can furnish hundreds of testimonials from parents who had abandoned all hopes of their sons.
 "Terms, three hundred dollars a quarter; this includes board, washing, and tuition."
 "Now, what do you think, my dear?" he asked, as he finished reading the circular.
 "Well, I think it just the place for him."
 "So do I, and I shall write to the professor this very night, to make arrangements."
 "Where is this school?"
 "In Newark, New Jersey."
 "The further away the better."
 True to his word, he wrote and made all arrange-



He was drunk as a boiled owl, and, with a cigar in his mouth, was trying to dance "Shoo-Fly." "Go it, ole man," yelled Shorty.

"Wal, if he can't preach no better den he can dance, I guess he won't do much in der salvation business."
 "Georgel!"
 "Oh, George."
 "You must not talk so."
 "Yer wants me ter tell der truth like a good boy, don't yer?"
 "Yes, but you must not make use of such expressions."
 "Gracious! I thought that was bully."
 "Oh, dear, I fear we shall never make anything good out of him," said Mrs. Squids.
 "How is it that you haven't been to school to-day?" asked the old man.
 "Wal, I thought I'd play hookey for fun."
 "If you do so again, I shall inform the truant officer of you."
 "All right; I drop," said Shorty, getting up from the table and going from the room.
 "That is a dreadful boy, and I don't know what we shall do with him," said Mrs. Squids.
 "Well, wife, we must remember that the greater the cross the brighter the crown."
 "True, but I think he is all bad."
 "No; he has some very smart things about him."
 "Yes, so far as mischief is concerned. Now, do you know, I believe if the truth were known, that he got Mr. Sleek into that affair somehow."
 "Oh, that is impossible. He certainly could not make him drink liquor against his will, and I fail to see how he could make him so far forget his dignity and calling as to dance and smoke a cigar. No; no; I fear we have been deceived in Mr. Sleek," said he, shaking his head sadly.
 "But I can't help thinking that that boy was the cause of it all."

And his Sunday-school teacher had full as bad a report to make of him.
 "There was so much deviltry in him that there seemed to be no chance left for anything good.
 Then the Squids began to debate as to whether it would not be best to let him go his own way, and not be responsible for his actions any longer.
 She was in favor of it, but he disliked to acknowledge that he was baffled.
 But at all events, Shorty was taken out of school, and Mr. Squids undertook to teach him at home; and a nice time he had of it.
 Finally, one evening, when he and his wife were alone, and Shorty was down in the kitchen making fun with the servants, he pulled a paper from his pocket.
 "My dear, I am getting tired of this boy, George; I can do nothing with him, and I have about concluded to abandon the trial."
 "Well, I think it would be a sensible thing to do," replied his wife.
 "He seems to be a bad case of moral depravity; but I think I have found something to-day that will make something of him."
 "In the name of goodness, what is it?"
 "Allow me to read a circular that accidentally came in my possession to-day. Here it is," said he, commencing to read:

"PRIVATE REFORM SCHOOL.

"TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.

"PROFESSOR BANG respectfully calls the attention of parents and guardians to his successfully established school for the education and reformation of untractable boys. He has had the most wonderful success with this class of boys; many who have

ments. The second day afterwards Shorty was bundled off and duly put under the reforming hand of Professor Bang.
 He didn't half like the affair anyhow, and when he came to reach the school he wished with all his heart that he had been a good boy and learned his lessons at home.
 Professor Bang was a character. About fifty years of age, tall, gaunt and wiry, old-fashioned in his dress, and a most perfect miser by nature, he was anything but a good-looking or an attractive man.
 And the boys he had in his school were about the worst lot that was ever got together, being, as he said in his circular, the worst lot that could be found. There were about fifty of them, and to appearances he had them completely under his thumb.
 He was a cowardly, cruel old rascal, and as the class of parents who entrusted their bad boys with him were not particular what treatment they received so long as they were out of their way, he had things pretty much his own way, and could punish as much as he pleased.
 But his favorite method of punishing scholars, especially if they had good appetites, was to starve them nearly to death. In this way he killed two birds with one stone, as he used to say, for he not only punished them, but he saved what they would have eaten had he corrected them in any other way.
 But he believed in flogging as well as starving, and there were many boys whose spirit he would break in this way, but as for actually reforming them, he never did it.
 Mr. Squids gave the professor a short history of Shorty and his inclination to mischief, and then left him in his charge.

Poor Shorty! He felt as lonesome as a borrowed purp. The professor looked ugly, the scholars looked ugly, and the whole place was cold and gloomy.

"Now, young man, do you know where you are?" asked the professor, after Squids had left.

"No, I'll be hanged if I do," he replied.

"Let that be the last reply of that kind that you make me, or off goes your head some of these fine days."

"Is this a slaughter-house?"

"You will find it so if you don't behave yourself," said Bang.

"Are you der boss?"

"I am; I am Professor Bang."

"Bang who?"

"Bang you, if you don't behave yourself."

"Wal, what der yer do here, anyway?"

"This is a reform school,"

"Political?"

"No, sir."

"Didn't know but what it was; I've hearn politicians talk 'bout reform."

"Well, you will not only hear it talked about here, but you will see it. Now if you are a good boy, all will be well, but if you show any of your deviltry here, I shall flog you fourteen times a day and give you nothing to eat."

"Bully old place, ain't it?"

"You will soon learn all about it," said he, after which he proceeded to take down his name, age and general description.

Then he was introduced to the other scholars, one of whom, Tom Burk, he was given for a chum and room-mate.

Tom was a bright, fine-looking lad, about fifteen years of age, and he and Shorty became first-rate friends right away, exchanging, of course, the leading points of each other's history.

Tom, being a favorite with the other boys, made it easy for Shorty, and the fact of his having been in the show business and bounced around pretty lively generally, soon became known, and he became a hero in less than a week.

But he was no hero with old Bang, any more than any of the other boys were, and although he had not had occasion to flog him thus far, he was continually on the watch for a chance to do so, feeling that he needed "reform," and that he must try his peculiar "method" on him.

Another thing that he did not fail to notice was that Shorty had a first-rate appetite, and wasn't a bit bashful with it either. This, of itself, was enough to make him dislike the cove, for he knew that there would be no chance to make much on him if he did not find some excuse for cutting off his rations.

But it was impossible for Shorty to keep out of mischief a great while, as the reader knows by this time, and yet his first attempt was not entirely successful.

It happened in this way. Possessing himself of a long carpet tack, he got into the school-room one noon and placed it on old Bang's chair, head down and business end up.

After dinner the boys all filed back into the room for the afternoon's school, and when they were all seated, in marched Bang with his bunch of switches in his hand, looking frowningly at every one of the boys. This he seemed to consider necessary on all occasions, for he never had a pleasant word or a smile for any of the poor devils under him. There was only one thing that would make him smile, and that was to hear that any of the boys were too sick to eat.

"What are you looking at, sir?" he yelled, at one of the boys.

"At you, sir."

"What business have you to look at me when you are not spoken to? Look at your book; and you," he said, shaking his bundle of switches at Shorty, "if I see another grin on your face for a week, I will make you laugh on the other side of your mouth. Mind your book."

"Yes, sir."

"No talk back; Master Burk, see that you have your spelling lesson perfect, or you will go to bed without your supper. I want perfect lessons from everybody, to-day, or there will be a hurricane let loose here."

He swaggered and bullied around for some moments, trying hard, as he always did, to find an excuse for making some poor devil go without his supper.

Then he marched along to his chair and sat down.

He got right up again real quick.

With a yell of rage, he leaped about five feet in the air.

Coming down on his feet he then began hunting for that tack.

He could locate it without any trouble, and with a most painfully comic face on him he proceeded to pull it out.

"Was he mad? Oh, no; not any!"

"Who placed this tack on my chair?" he asked, holding it up.

Until now the boys, with the exception of Shorty, couldn't for the life of them make out what the deuce was the matter with the old man. They thought he had gone crazy, or had got the jim jams.

But when they saw him hold up the tack, they dropped to the racket right away, and a loud roar of laughter greeted his question.

"Silence, you rascals! Again, I ask who it was that placed this tack in my chair?"

Each looked at the other, and again a peal of laughter was the result.

"Silence, every one of you! Now, if I can find out in no other way, I will flog the whole school, and make you go without your suppers."

No reply was made, and the old man almost smiled at his saving revenge.

"All right, I'll proceed to flog you all, and then I shall be sure to get the right one. Come up here, Master Murphy."

Young Murphy obeyed reluctantly, but Bang met him in the middle of the floor, and proceeded to go for him with the bundle of sticks.

"Drop it," said Shorty, in a disguised voice.

"Who was it that spoke?" he asked, after he had polished off his first victim.

They all knew well enough, but there were no tell-tales in that shool, so no answer was made.

"Very well; I shall have the satisfaction of flogging the right one at all events," said he, seizing another fellow and shaking him out into the middle of the floor.

Just as he began giving it to him, Shorty shied a book at the old man's head, and it nearly knocked the long nose off of him. This was a signal of revolt, for each fellow knew that he would have to get a flogging and go without his supper anyway, so they instantly concluded that they might as well be hung for an old sheep as a lamb.

The next minute the air was full of books, slates, ink bottles, and whatever else they could get hold of to throw, and in one or two instances the fellows pulled off their shoes and chucked them at him.

They hit him in the nose, on the mug, in the back, in short, they peppered him all over in the liveliest style that ever a teacher got peppered.

"Hold on! Stop, I say, or I will murder every one of you!" he yelled.

"You will, hey?" they yelled, and just then a bottle of ink hit him on the snoot, breaking and making a coon of him in an instant.

He rushed from the room with a black face and a bloody nose, to say nothing of the other bruised portions of his body, and the boys were victorious.

Such a shout as they sent up was never raised in that private reform school before.

The old man was out by the pump washing his face and trying to stop his nose bleed, during which time the boys were laughing, shouting, and enjoying themselves hugely.

Shorty leaped upon one of the desks, and began to dance a breakdown, to the great delight of the boys, and he was just in the midst of it when old Bang returned.

The boys got into their seats again leisurely and waited events. But Bang had learned a lesson himself, and so he went directly to his desk and seated himself, first taking particular pains to see that there were no carpet tacks there.

"Young men, you will please bear in mind that the law is on my side, and that you have all laid yourselves liable to it. What you have done to me I shall repay with interest, but in my own particular way, bear that in mind. But each and every one of you will go without your supper to-night, preliminary to what is to follow."

They made no reply, but Shorty began to feel sorry that he had been the means of having them all go to bed hungry.

But there was no help for it now, and they were all in for it together.

But there was no further attempt to flog the whole school that afternoon, and in fact, he never took the chances of doing it again, for he had barely escaped with a whole pate.

The sleeping rooms at Bang's reformatory school were all on one floor, and all opened into a wide hall.

They were situated directly over the school-room and the one occupied by Bang, so that he could hear the least noise that they might make after they had gone to bed.

As before stated, Shorty felt bad to think that the boys had to go without their suppers on his account, so he set to work to see if there wasn't some way to get hunk for them.

Bang went out after they had retired, and just as soon as Shorty saw him go, he crept softly down stairs to see how the land lay.

The dining-room and kitchen were both locked, and the cook had gone to bed.

But Shorty had a skeleton key that would unlock almost anything, and so he was not long in getting into the kitchen, where he found about a dozen loaves of bread that had been made for supper, but which were now being saved for breakfast.

Quickly tumbling them into a big basket, he looked around and found several rolls of butter, and these he placed on top of the loaves of bread, after which he grabbed a handful of table knives, and then left the room, locking the door after him.

The boys were wide awake, and two of them assisted him in getting the basket up stairs.

How they did go for that bread and butter!

They voted Shorty a brick, and they all gathered around the basket in the hallway and enjoyed themselves hugely, having much more than they wanted; something that had never happened before since they had been to the school.

But Bang returned while the feast was in progress, and they heard him coming up the stairs.

"Cheese it, fellows!" said Shorty; and in the twinkling of a pig's tail, they were all out of sight in their own rooms, taking with them what there was left of their feast.

"What is going on here?" demanded Bang, savagely. "Why are you not in bed?"

"Go shoot yourself!" yelled Shorty.

"Go ride on a carpet tack!" cried another.

"Pull down your vest!"

"What d'yer say?"

"Go bounce yourself!" and dozens of other similar expressions greeted him from every room on the floor.

The old professor was wild, but he could not recognize any of the voices for certain, and yet he wanted to.

Finally, in desperation he went to the door of the room occupied by Tommy Grant and another fellow.

It was bolted, and he demanded admittance.

Just then Shorty opened the door of his room cautiously, and seeing the old fellow's back towards him, he shied a loaf of bread at him, and hit him squarely in the back, knocking his hat off, and causing him to utter a grunt that was heard by every one of the boys.

Then other doors were opened and other loaves of bread were hurled at him, together with books, bottles, sticks of wood, and everything that they could get hold of.

Bang found himself in another shower, and as before, he concluded to get out just as quickly as possible, and so he started for the stairs.

But the boys had become bold, and in order to follow up the advantage they had gained, they came out and pelted him all the way down with bed lamps, pillows, and what there was left of the bread.

Shorty caught up one of the balls of butter, and ran to the head of the stairs, down which Bang was going as lively as possible.

Taking good aim, he threw the butter down, and hit the professor on the top of his head, and it went all over him as it squashed and went to pieces.

He finally reached a place of safety, and proceeded to repair damages.

Was he mad this time? You bet.

The boys retired, laughing, to their own rooms, thinking what a bully little fellow Shorty was, and how much fun they were having since he had come amongst them.

But there was trouble ahead.

Old Bang scraped the butter from his head, and then proceeded to study up a way whereby he might get even with his rebellious pupils, and once more get control of them.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE reader will remember how Shorty managed to get a supper for the boys at Bang's Reform School, and how the old man got pelted with bread and butter, and everything else, in fact, that they could get hold of to hurl after him as he retreated down stairs.

The tyrant of former times was fast losing his grip since Shorty had dawned upon the scene, and now the problem he was puzzling himself with was, what should he do to get even with the boys of his school, and again to get them under his thumb.

He studied over it for a long time, while the boys over his head were laughing and having the best time they had ever enjoyed since coming to the Newark school.

Something effectual must be done right away, or he would lose his reputation of being a success at reforming bad boys, the only one thing which kept him up and enabled him to make money. He was a perfect coward by nature; but he could concoct schemes and carry them out with the utmost cruelty and deliberation.

One of his favorite methods of keeping down and crushing the spirit of the boys placed in his charge was by a boastful show of power, and trying to convince them that he had the authority to torture them to death, even, if he chose. But it wasn't all show, for the cruel old tyrant often flogged them without mercy.

But this new and unexpected turn in affairs startled him from his dream of power, and convinced the boys that Mr. Bang was not the all-conquering monster they had always thought him.

Of course, Shorty at once became a great favorite among the scholars; and, runt though he was, the boys regarded him as their leader in all mischief.

Mr. Bang revolved several plans in his head, and finally, before he went asleep, he settled upon one that would be both effective and awe-inspiring.

The next day he hired an assistant, and divided the school up in such a way that he would never be exposed again to their united wrath, as he had been. In this way he would divide his enemies, for he regarded his pupils as such, and conquer them in small squads.

The next day the boys expected battle; but, to their great surprise, the old man even appeared smiling. But it wasn't that kind of a smile that made them feel very happy. He never mentioned the occurrences of the day and evening before, but the smile he wore over his ugly mug said, as plainly as his voice could have said it:

"I shall get even with you yet."

"We'll catch Darby, never fear," said some of them.

"Not much. He's weakened," replied Shorty.

The majority of them wanted to believe that Shorty was right, but somehow they couldn't.

True, the old man looked smiling, but it wasn't very assuring.

With this belief the boys actually behaved better than common for the next few days.

But Bang still smiled and went on with his work.

The work was this. In one of the recitation rooms that he had not used of late only for a sort of store-room, he was constructing, when not busy with the school, what he called a revolving boy thrasher, he being a sort of Jack-at-all-trades, and able to use tools very well.

In fact, he was too mean and stingy to hire a carpenter, or any other mechanic to do anything, so long as he could botch it up himself.

This boy thrasher was a curiosity from which he expected great results, and while he was building it he experienced the utmost comfort in contem-

At length the boy thrasher was finished, and the recitation room cleared up. The next day he selected about a dozen of the worst boys in his school, among whom was Shorty, of course, and took them into the room.

"I will hear my class recite in this room in future," said he.

When the boys beheld the machine, they were utterly at a loss to understand what it was for, and various were the comments passed upon it.

"Please, Mr. Bang, what's that?" asked one of the boys.

"You will find out what it is," said he.

"I know," said Shorty.

"You do? What is it?"

"It's a carpet-beatin' machine."

"No, it's a street-sweeper," suggested another.

"It's a piece of a big hand-organ," said Tom Burk.

turn of mind, he wanted to see how the old thing worked.

It didn't take him long to find out.

"Well, how do you like it?" asked Bang, as he stopped the machine.

"Oh, it's bully, ole man. I've been licked all sorts of ways in my life, but that beats them all. Beats them all to once!"

"Yes, an' beats them devilish hard, too," said Tom Burk, rubbing his back in company with the others.

"Now go to your seats, and understand that I shall run you through this machine every day unless you behave yourselves."

In less than two hours he had put the whole class through, as their uneasy movements on their benches clearly indicated, and the old rascal was greatly delighted with the way his invention worked.



The next minute the air was full of books, slates, ink bottles, and whatever else they could get hold of to throw.

plating it, and naming over the boys he would first honor with it.

In fact, so much faith did he have in it, that he never offered to flog one of them while he was building it, being resolved on paying them off for old and new when it was finished.

Shorty, in the meantime, grew very bold in his devilry, although he did not forget to contrive much of it in such a way as should make somebody else seem to be the guilty party.

It will be remembered that he had a weakness for having the fun, and of allowing somebody else to get the floggings.

But the boy thrasher grew apace, and, perhaps, this would be a good place to describe it, although a glance at the illustration will make it clearer.

It consisted of a drum about ten feet long, made to revolve with a crank, and into the surface of this drum were placed about a hundred long rattans, as the picture shows, making it resemble somewhat a revolving broom, such as are used to sweep streets with. On one side of this drum was placed a pair of stocks, similar to those used in old times to place criminals in for punishment in public. Just how it worked we shall see further on.

This hammering and sawing did not cause the boys to suspect anything, for he was always puttering with some sort of work. On the contrary, it gave them more opportunity to do as they pleased, for he was not around to watch them so much, and as for the assistant teacher, they got the best of him before he had been there a week.

"Oh, I'll fix the young rascals," muttered Mr. Bang, as his machine grew to completion. "I'll make them regret that they ever trifled with me. I'll have every mother's son of them so sore that they can't sit down," and he smiled a happy smile as he thought of it.

"Yes, you will find that it is a hand-organ. Now, come to order and proceed with your studies, and woe to the first boy I find looking off his book."

But it was next to impossible for them to obey, for the strange piece of schoolroom furniture excited their curiosity very much, and so in less than five minutes Bang had caught three or four of them looking at the machine, and ordered them out on to the floor.

"I will now proceed to show you what this machine is for, since it seems to excite your curiosity so much," and he unfastened the stocks and placed the necks of his victims into it and then made it fast again.

Their bodies were now in position to receive the blows from the rattan in the drum.

When he had them all right, he seized the crank of the drum and began to turn it smartly.

The blows fairly rained upon the poor devils, and they roared with pain.

The thing tickled Shorty wonderfully, and, unable to control himself, he laughed loudly.

"Bully!" said he; "I know what she is now. She's a boy bouncer. Devilish good!"

"You think so, do you?" asked Bang, after he had tested his machine fully.

"Best thing I ever saw," and the whole class laughed loudly.

"Very well, sir; but in order to be able to vouch for its virtues, you must try it," said he, unlocking the stocks and liberating the machine-flogged boys.

"Come up here, sir; and you, Master Burk, and you, young Sniffin, and you, Master Bates."

"I ain't done nuffin," whined the latter.

"Well, I'll do something for you. Get in here," said he, placing them in the stocks.

Shorty was delighted, for, being of an inquiring

And it had its desired effect in many ways, for the majority of the boys learned to dread the thing, and so behaved themselves very much better than they would have done had Bang held over them simply his old bundle of sticks.

During the first week every member of the school was put through the machine, many of them twice, and Shorty three times. In fact, he rather seemed to like it, and finally he padded the seat of his pants and jacket in such a way as to be able to receive the blows of the machine without experiencing any pain.

One day he filled the seat of his pants (in between the outside and the stuffing with which they were padded) with red pepper, and then purposely cut up some mischief for the sake of getting put through the whipping-machine.

The result was that the old man nearly sneezed the top of his head off, and the boys set up such a yelling and sneezing, that school had to be dismissed for the day.

But Shorty didn't have much fun out of the affair, for he was compelled to remain in the room after the others had been let out, and there he sneezed until he could see stars, and his schoolmates were looking in at the window and laughing at him.

"Oh, I'll get hunk with you fellers," said he, shaking his fist at them.

That night he got three or four of the boys, and they tied the tails of two cats together, and carried them stealthily down stairs to Mr. Bang's room, the game being that Shorty should rap on the door and go in on some errand or other, and then the others were to throw the cats into the room before he closed the door.

"Come in," was the response to Shorty's rap, and opening the door, he waddled into the room.

"Well, sir?" growled Bang.

"Please, sir, I—"

Just then the boys threw in the cats, and then cut and run up stairs to their rooms.

As might have been expected, the cats at once, finding their tails tied together, began to fight and squall like the mischief, rushing under the bed, over the bed, between Bang's legs, upon his table, knocking things over, and smashing them in the wildest manner.

Shorty pretended to be frightened, and ran out of the room, while Bang seized a broom and attempted to drive the cats out.

But in this he did not meet with very great success, for he broke a mirror and several dishes in trying to hit them, and in fact, did as much damage as the cats did.

"Scat out of this!" he yelled, making another blow at them, and knocking his lamp over and breaking it.

Here was a pretty mess, indeed. The room was in darkness, and those cats still fighting and yelling like a pair of devils. Bang was so mad that his hair stood on end. He kept pelting away, and finally succeeded in knocking his stove-pipe down, and that smashed his clock.

Mr. Whack, his assistant, hearing the great confusion, went to his door and opened it to see what the matter was, just in time to get a whack in the face from that furiously-whirled broom, knocking him back on his beam end, and nearly blinding him.

The cats got apart and escaped out of the open door.

Bang was blind with rage, and seeing that he had knocked somebody down, he never stopped to see who it was, but set upon the poor assistant, and nearly knocked the stuffing out of him before he stopped, or rather, before Whack could pick himself up and dust out.

"Darn everybody!" yelled Bang, going back into his room. "I'll have the whole hide off of every rascal in my school, the young devils!"

It was quite awhile before he could get his lamp lighted again, and during the time the boys overhead, who had been listening to the riot, were almost splitting themselves with laughter.

"I'll make them laugh in the morning, and they shall do it on empty stomachs, too," he said, and he at once went to the kitchen, and told the cook not to get any breakfast for the whole school.

This made him feel better, for if there was any balm for his wounded feelings, it was the existence of an excuse for cheating the boys out of a meal of victuals.

But on returning to his room again, and seeing the damage that had been done, he concluded that he should have to cheat them out of at least a week's board in order to get even.

Poor Mr. Whack appeared next morning with a black eye and a peeled nose, as the result of his share of the fun, but which greatly astonished the school-master.

"What have you been doing, sir?" he demanded.

"You did it, Mr. Bang," meekly replied Whack.

"I did it! What do you mean, sir?"

"Last night, when the row was."

Bang looked puzzled.

"I went to your room to see what the uproar was, and you knocked me down with a broom or something, just as I opened the door."

"Great buzzards! Was that you?"

"Yes, sir," said Whack, mournfully.

"Why, I thought it was one of them scoundrelly boys, who threw the cats into my room. I had no idea that it was you."

"But it was, sir."

"I am very sorry. But you shall have the satisfaction of seeing the whole school put through the flogging machine."

"I'm afraid that won't take the color out of my eye, or mend the bark on my nose."

"Well, at all events, it will mend your feelings, as it will mine."

"Do you know which ones did it?"

"They all did it. There never was such a set of scoundrels got together as I have here, and I believe that that little runt of a Squids has set the devil into all of them. But I'll fix them, if I have to hire a man to turn the crank."

As for Shorty, he not only enjoyed the fun with the rest of them, but he knew that he should have the satisfaction of seeing the whole school put through a course of rattan sprouts for laughing at him while he was sneezing.

But none of them were prepared to go without their breakfast, and yet they had to, every mother's son of them.

Disgusted and hungry, they gathered in the school-room at the usual hour.

Bang came in with his smile on.

Whack wasn't smiling much.

He somehow looked serious.

"Of course there is no occasion for me to mention last night's occurrences; but to save time, if the boys who threw the cats into my room will only confess, I will proceed to punish them; if not, then I shall machine the whole school."

No one spoke for some moments, but finally Shorty held up his hand.

"Well, what is it?"

"Yer know it wasn't me, don't yer?"

"Well, it is barely possible that you may be innocent of that particular piece of business, but if you are, it's a wonder. First class go to the recitation room," he added, and a dozen or so filed demurely into the whipping department.

A batch of them were placed in the stocks.

"Master Squids, take the crank."

Shorty grinned until he looked as though he was all mouth, as he marched up and seized the crank. He was getting hunk with a vengeance.

"Now, then, turn it lively."

"Yer bet I will, for they laughed at me yesterday," replied Shorty, starting the crank.

"Oh—oh! 'Twas Shorty did it!" yelled one of the boys who was catching it.

"Shorty's doing it now," said Bang, calmly.

"You bet he is."

Bang walked back and forth with the bundle of switches in his hand.

He was happy, for he was flogging his pupils on empty stomachs.

"Well, do you think you want to tie any more cats together and throw them into my room? What is your opinion of fun at night, and no breakfast and a flogging in the morning?"

Another batch was put through, and Shorty was kept busy until nearly noon, and a long time after the thing had ceased to be funny, for he soon began to feel as though the other fellows were having the easiest time of it, for he was very tired, and besides that, he saw that he was getting the whole school down on him, and the prospect was first-rate for his getting a head put on himself.

In fact, three or four fights did result from it after school, but they couldn't get away with Shorty very easily, and besides, he had turned the crank very slowly when his friends were in, and this made up a party in his favor.

Things went on for a week or two in this way, and Bang began to realize that he was once more the boss, and so felt better.

But Shorty made up his mind to burst that old body snatcher, as he called it, and a conspiracy was formed for the especial purpose.

But one piece of mischief entered his head which he concluded to carry out before the thing was destroyed.

Bang had a pig about six months old, and one day Shorty and his chum, Tom Burk, got this pig out of his pen and placed him inside of the big drum containing the rattans.

This they were able to do while the old man was away, and by taking out a portion of one of the ends.

The next morning, as usual, two or three offenders were placed in the machine, and Bang grasped the crank.

Giving two or three turns stirred Mr. Pig up pretty lively, and he began to squeal as though the old boy had got him, for he was going bumpety-bump on the inside of the concern.

Bang was completely puzzled, and the whole school was in an uproar.

"What is the meaning of this?" he demanded, stopping the drum.

"Sounds as if der was live pork in dere," suggested Shorty.

There was more trouble for the old man; he was almost justified in having a whipping machine.

Taking out the head of the drum, he found the bruised and squealing porker, and the reader can guess how frightened he was. With considerable trouble he was gotten out and run out of the room.

"I'll give double breakfasts for a month to any boy who will tell me who did that," said Bang; but nobody gave it away.

"All right, I'll put you all through, then," and he was as good as his word.

But it was the last machine whipping he ever did with that old contrivance, for the next day Shorty and another fellow got into the room after school and sawed the shaft almost off on one side, so that when he attempted to use it again it broke, and tumbled down a complete wreck.

Bang was awfully mad, but that was all the good it did him. His boy-thrasher was all smashed to pieces, and the scholars were wild with delight. Once more he was obliged to fall back on the hand-flogging, and experience showed him that it didn't amount to much.

Of course the boys grew bolder under the lead of Shorty, and in less than a week they could do about as they liked. This, of course, meant all kinds of devilry, and such good times had never been had before since they had come to the school. Bang was discouraged, and when Mr. Squids went out to see how his adopted son got along, he did not hear a very good report of him.

As for Shorty, he was never so contented in his life, and if that was what they called a reform school, he never wanted to attend any other; it was one continued round of fun, and in proportion to the way Bang weakened did he go ahead.

It will be remembered that Bang was an old bachelor, and the only female who ever entered his room was the cook, who only went there to make up his bed, while he himself did the other work.

The boys knew the room first-rate, as they were frequently in it, and so Shorty concluded to play a sweet joke on him the very first time he could catch him out long enough. So he bought a quart of molasses down at the store, and kept it in his room for a purpose.

Finally, one evening after school was over, Bang went up town for something, and Shorty took his bottle of molasses and stole down to his room.

With his skeleton key he opened the door and then at once proceeded to business. Turning down the sheets carefully, he proceeded to empty the molasses in long, sweet lines, up and down the bed, after which he spread the clothes back again, and returned to report to his fellows.

There was no early retiring that night, for they all knew that Bang went to bed exactly at nine, and they wanted to be where they could at least hear how the old man liked his sweetness.

Bang went the rounds of the room just before retiring, as was his custom, but on this occasion he found everything remarkably quiet. The boys were all in bed and seemingly asleep, but no sooner did they hear him going down the stairs, than they all stole softly out into the entry and crept down on the stairs to listen.

But they did not have to wait long. Bang was a jerky old rooster, anyway, and his style of getting into bed was peculiarly his own. At all events, he didn't burn his lamp a moment longer than was absolutely necessary, but turning it away down low, he would take off his clothes, blow out the light, pull down the bed clothing, and leap in with many an "ough!" and a shiver and shake.

He did so on this occasion, and got well rolled in before he discovered that something was wrong. Then he yelled seven kinds of murder, and leaped out of bed. The sheets came out with him, having stuck to him on account of the molasses.

"Wo—wo! Ah—ah! whoop!" they heard him exclaim. "Help—help!"

This was, of course, all the signal that the boys wanted, and rushing back for the hall lamp, they ran down stairs in their night shirts, and entered the room of poor old sweetened Bang.

What a comical picture met their sight! There stood the teacher in the middle of the floor, with his arms extended and his fingers spread wide apart, while the sheets were clinging to his long, lank body, and the molasses running down his legs in little streams.

"What is the matter, Mr. Bangs?" they all asked, at the same time being hardly able to keep from yelling.

"Oh, dear—dear, what is all this?" he moaned. They gathered around him.

"You've got something on you, sir," said some.

"It's tar," said Shorty.

"No, it aren't. Why, it's 'lasses," said another.

"Molasses! How should molasses come in my bed?" he demanded, fiercely.

"How should we know?"

"Oh, you young devils!"

"We?" they all asked, innocently.

"Yes, you! I'll bet a million of dollars to a peanut shuck that some of you rascals have done this trick," said he.

"Oh, sir!"

"How could we, if yer door was locked?" asked Shorty.

"I don't know; but I'm sure that you did it in some way. Get out of here and go to bed, you imps of darkness—get!"

They ran out of the room and up stairs, uttering yells of laughter which nearly broke Bang's heart.

A bath was the only thing that would relieve him, and as there was no hot water or fire, he was obliged to take a cold one before he could go to bed. And maybe he didn't dance and indulge in three-inch cuss words, oh, no!

And maybe Shorty and his friends didn't have a good laugh over the affair.

But that was the straw that broke the camel's back. The old man made up his mind that Shorty was at the bottom of all the mischief, as he had never had so much trouble until he came, and so resolved that he should leave the school.

The next morning he wrote as follows to Mr. Squids:

"Sir:—Come and take your boy away from my school, or I will cremate him."
BANG.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE next day Mr. Squids went with a heavy heart to take Shorty away from the reform school of Mr. Bang, where he had played the mischief so long.

"What is the matter?" he asked, of the much-abused master.

"Matter! Great Absalom! Matter! Why, he is the very devil in miniature, the very devil, sir!" said Bang, with much earnestness.

"Why, sir, I—I don't understand you," said good Mr. Squids.

"Well, I can't help it if you do not; what I say regarding the young rascal is true."

"But I thought you reformed bad boys."

"So I do, sir, so I do, but I do not profess to reform the imps of Satan."

"Oh, no, Mr. Bang, not so bad as that."

"Yes, sir; just as bad; he is the worst young ruffian that I ever knew, and you can't flog the devil-try out of him any more than you can whip the stink out of a skunk."

"I am sorry to hear you say it."

"And I am sorry to have to give him up for a bad job, but I can't do anything with him, and he sets the devil going in every other boy I have. I have never had so much trouble with every boy in my school as I have experienced since he came here, and I have either got to expel him or give up my school."

"But don't you suppose that if I should talk to him, that he would do better?"

"No, he can't do better to save his life. He takes to all sorts of devilry just as naturally as a hen does to scratching."

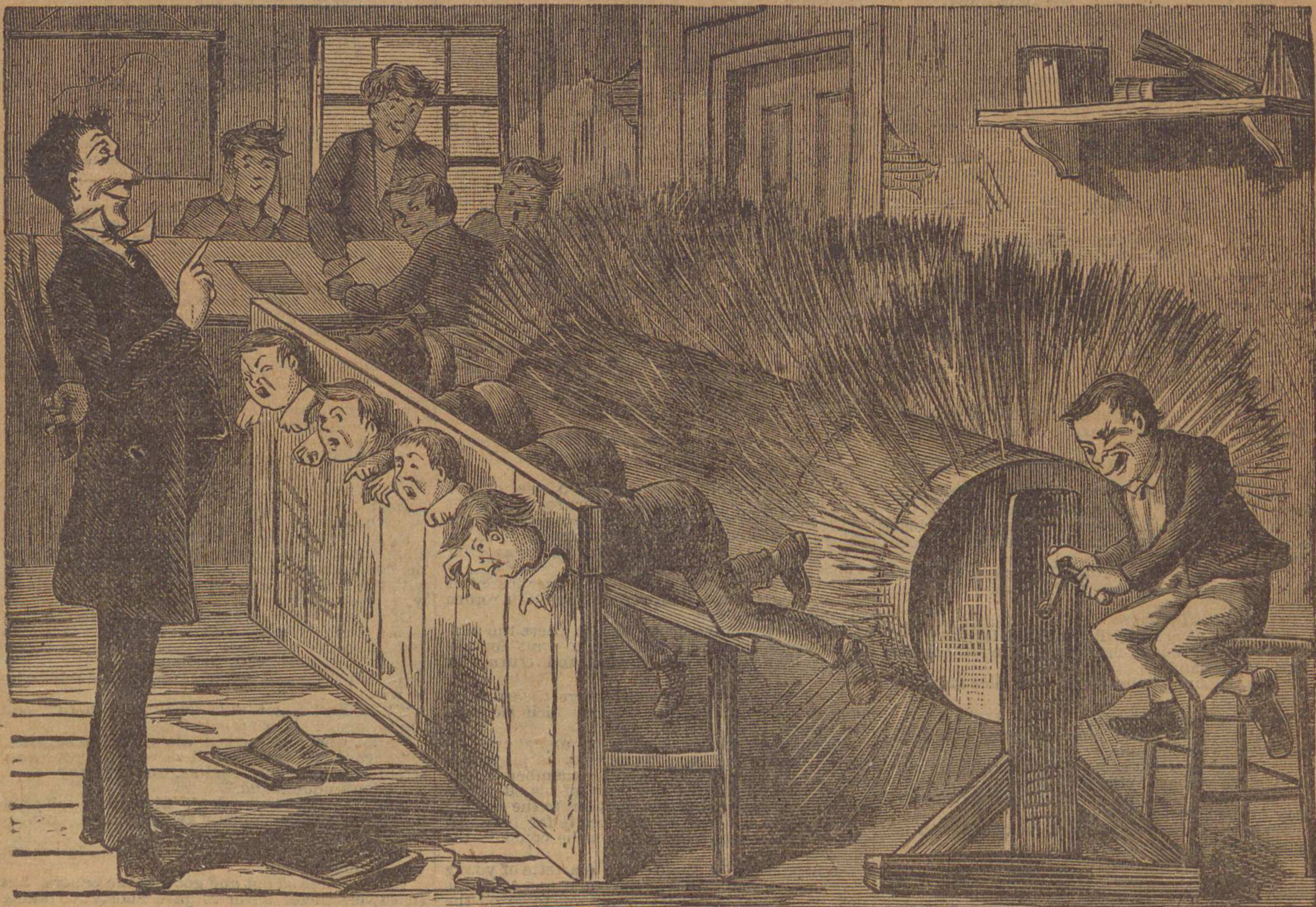
"But won't you try him a while longer?"

"No, sir, not for fifty dollars a week."

"Well, I'm sure I don't know what I shall do with him," groaned Squids.
 "I know what I should do with him if he belonged to me, I'd set him adrift and never bother my head any more about him."
 "But I have adopted him."
 "Well, you can do as you like, of course; but he can't remain in my school any longer, that I am determined upon."
 "Well, call him in here."
 Bang went out and sent Shorty into the room where his sad adopted parent was waiting.
 "Hallo, Squiddy, ole man, how you was?" said he, extending his hand for a shake.
 Mr. Squids gazed sorrowfully upon him, but made no reply, and took no notice of the hand that was offered him.
 "What's ther row? Won't you shake?" asked Shorty, looking surprised.

announcement, and showed by their looks that they were sorry to part with him.
 "Wipe off yer chin, ole man," said Shorty, standing by the door ready to go.
 "You young scoundrel, I —"
 "Don't get yer shirt off, ole man."
 "If you don't clear out, I'll —"
 "Pull down yer vest!" yelled Shorty, and the whole school was laughing loudly.
 Bang made a dive for him, but he got out of the way with the agility of a cat, while Bang turned his attention towards his laughing scholars and eased his feelings by walloping two or three of them and giving them a lecture on Shorty.
 Shorty and his father took the cars and returned to New York, both feeling somewhat sad.
 But neither of them felt so sad as Mrs. Squids did, for there had been peace in the house since he had left it, and she had fondly hoped that he would stay

"Shocking! and on the Sabbath, too!" said he.
 "Oh, it is so mortifying! I shall never dare to look anybody in the face again."
 "What shall we do with that boy?" he groaned, as they walked up the front stoop.
 "Well, if it wasn't Sunday, I should say that I wished the Evil One had him," said she.
 Squids made no reply, but started up stairs for the purpose of reaching the roof, and taking in that comical display on his flag-pole.
 He reached it finally, and just as he began to pull it in, the crowd below gave him three cheers, which fairly made his hair stand.
 But he got that bustle and himself out of sight on the double quick, you bet; yet the crowd of boys and curious people lingered around for several minutes in the hope of seeing more fun.
 "Where could he have found it?" asked Squids, as he came bringing it down to his wife.



Shorty grinned until he looked as though he was all mouth, as he marched up and seized the crank. Here was getting hunk with a vengeance.

"George, you are a very bad boy."
 "Oh, George!" chirped the little rascal.
 "A very bad boy."
 "What's der matter? I ain't been doin' nuffin'." Ask Mr. Bang if I ain't a nice boy."
 "Ah! I have just been asking Mr. Bang all about it, and he says you are so bad that you must leave his school."
 "What! Has der ole duffer been goin' back on me?" he asked, quickly.
 "He has been telling me of your doings here, and I have come to take you away."
 "Is that so?" muttered Shorty.
 The truth was, he had become greatly attached to the school and the boys composing it, as they also had to him, and the thought of leaving it was not a pleasant one. It was only the night before that he was telling his chum that it was as good as a circus, and he had laid out some more fun. But now he was "laid out" himself.
 "Get your things and go home with me."
 "Oh, say, let me stay here a little bit longer. I'll be a bully good boy."
 "No; Mr. Bang will not have you an hour longer, I am sorry to say."
 "Oh, he go shoot himself!" growled Shorty, going from the room.
 "I wonder if it would be wicked to let him get lost?" mused Squids, who was sick of his job.
 As soon as Shorty had got his things packed, he waddled into the school-room.
 "Good-by, fellows, I'm off," said he.
 "Silence, sir!" roared Bang.
 "Oh, you go drown yourself in 'lasses; good-by, boys, old Bang's gone back on me, and I'm goin' back to York."
 "For which we are very thankful," said Bang.
 The scholars were very much taken aback by this

a long time away, or that something else would happen to continue his absence.
 The servants, however, were glad to see him again, for although he had often played tricks upon them, they rather liked him for the fun he made.
 There was no being lonesome where Shorty was. For two or three days he behaved himself very well, although the reader knows how utterly impossible it was for him to do so any length of time.
 On Sunday he was trotted off to church as usual.
 His Sabbath-school teacher wasn't a bit glad to see him, although a majority of the scholars were, for they liked him ever so much.
 But he got along very well, and never attempted any of his pranks.
 But when Mr. and Mrs. Squids returned home, leaving Shorty with his class, their attention was called to quite a number of people standing on the street opposite their house, looking over towards it.
 "Mercy! what can be the matter?" asked Mrs. Squid. "Is our house on fire?"
 "I guess not; yet what can they be looking at?" asked her husband.
 "Let us hurry."
 They did so, and as they came nearer, they saw that the people were looking up towards the top of the house and laughing.
 Looking up themselves, they were astonished to see Mrs. Squids' huge bustle hanging at the end of the flagstaff that projected over the sidewalk, and on it in large letters: "To Let. Furnished."
 They were stricken almost dumb at the sight, and each instantly concluded who had done it—Shorty, the great mischief.
 "Oh—oh! isn't that dreadful?" she asked.

"He must have got it out of the front room, for it was there the last time I saw it, the young rascal!"
 "Ah, wife, I begin to fear that we have undertaken a task that we can never accomplish."
 "I think so, too, if we ever expect to make anything out of him that is good."
 "I almost wish he would run away."
 "Well, if he ever does, we will never go after him that's one certainty."
 The old man groaned, and turned away.
 When Shorty returned from Sunday-school, Squids and his wife went for him red hot.
 "How dare you do such a thing?" said she.
 "Do what?" he asked, looking sober.
 "Why, such a thing as to hang my—my—on the flag-pole."
 "I never hung yer on no flag-pole."
 "Yes, you did. Nobody else would have done it."
 "Done what?"
 "You know very well what I mean."
 "No. I'll be hung myself if I do."
 "George, don't lie," said Squids.
 "No, I'll be damned if I do."
 "What is that you say, you shocking boy?" said she.
 "Wal, dat's what they tells me at Sunday-school, anyway," said Shorty.
 "What made you hang Mrs. Squids' bustle out on the end of the flag-pole on the roof?"
 "Was dat a bustle? Pshaw! I thought as how it was a patent hen-coop."
 "But what business had you to place it there, and put that sign on to it?"
 "Wal, don't yer see, I thought if it was a hen-coop we didn't want it, and had better offer to let it furnished. See?"

"Yes, I see that you are a very bad boy, and I wish that we had never seen you," said she.

"So do I, ole gal."

"Don't you dare call me an old gal."

"What are yer, an old woman?" Yer ain't a very young one, I swear."

"Be careful how you talk, sir," put in Squids.

"Yes, and if you will only leave us forever, we will never go after you, or try to get you back."

"Yer won't?" he asked, with much animation.

"No; we have become utterly sick of you, and heartily wish you would go."

"Be you sick, too?" he asked of the old man.

"Yes; I am discouraged. You are a bad boy, and are determined not to become any better."

"Nonsense! I'm a good little cuss. Go ter meet-in' an' Sunday-school, and my teacher, she is goin' ter make a little angel of me some time, and give me lessons in flyin' an' playin' on der harp."

"Well, I wish you would do so right away."

"Got soured on me, hey?"

"Yes, we have."

"Well, dat's all right; I may take it inter my head to make yer feel bad some day."

"You could never do it by leaving us."

"Oh, yes I could. Only think how lonesome you would feel without your dear little George; yer darling woutsy-poutsy, what loves his mama so," said he, with a comical expression of face.

"We should have some peace, at all events."

"Oh, how you will squeal when you miss me."

"Yes, for joy."

"Go to your room and read your Bible," said Squids.

"Oh, all right," said he, going away.

In ten minutes from that time they heard him playing upon his banjo.

Then they both rolled up their eyes, raised their hands, and asked if there was ever such a bad boy in the whole world.

Nora, the servant-girl, was sent up to stop him.

"Will you hould yer whist?" she asked.

"Hold my what?"

"Yer whist."

"I ain't sayin' anything."

"Will ye be aisy wid yer ould drummin' machine? Faix, Mr. Squids bade me come up an' heave ye out of the windy."

"Oh, they love me so that they wanted yer ter give me a ride, hey?"

"Sure, I heard him till ye ter read yer Bible, an' here ye are cuttin' monkeyshines on a banjo."

"Wal, yer know it's been a good while since I had a chance ter play, an' it kinder makes me feel good. See, Nora?"

"Shure, if I was yer father, I'd make yer fale better nor that wid a whip. Don't ye know how pious the boss is?"

"Wal, arn't I pious?"

"Yes, an' so is the devil," she said, laughing.

"Been ter Sunday-school, an' said my little lesson like a little man."

"Yes, an' hung a bustle on ther pole afore you went."

Shorty laughed heartily.

"An' then ye come home an' raise the devil's dance on yer ould fiddle."

"Git out. It's just as good as a church organ."

"Oh, ye young haythen!"

"Mind this," said he, striking up "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning."

"Whoop!" shouted the girl, delighted with her national tune.

"How's that?" he asked.

"Och, but it's illigant. Sure, I didn't know the thing had St. Patrick in it."

"It's got everything in it, Nora," and changing from that to "Old Hundred," he played it finely for a moment, and then struck up "The Wearing of the Green."

The girl was delighted, and so were Mr. and Mrs. Squids down stairs.

But, just like Shorty, he changed again to St. Patrick, and played it up lively.

Nora twisted and squirmed around for a minute or more, and then, unable to stand it any longer, she began to dance.

He played faster and faster, and presently she forgot herself and shouted and slammed around to a wild extent. Mr. Squids called to her once or twice, but she did not hear him, and so he had to go up stairs before he could restore the usual Sabbath quiet in his house.

The next day Shorty went to see Sergeant Polly, and gave him a history of himself since they had met last, together with the "sickness" he had created in the house of his adopted parents.

The upshot was that Polly went to see Squids and had a talk with him.

"Are you willing that I should take him off of your hands?" he asked.

"Willing? I'll give you a thousand dollars if you'll do it," replied Squids.

"I'll take it," said Polly.

"And when will you take him?"

"Right away."

"Very good; here is my check," said Squids, going to his desk.

That settled it, and Shorty was called.

"George, I have given you to this gentleman."

"Oh, George! That's bully for you. I always thought you was a nice old rooster."

"Gracious! what expressions. And you have always treated me as though I were nice," said he, reproachfully.

"Wal, yer know I never went much on gospel, an' I like show business in mine."

"Well, go and be happy."

"You bet I will."

"But you ought to feel very grateful to this gentleman, Shorty, for he has been a good friend to you," said Sergeant Polly.

"Oh, that's all right, serge. I think he's jest old watermelons, and if yer ever have a benefit, pop, I'll do my best for yer."

And so they parted.

Sergeant Polly, it will be remembered, was ambitious to become a manager. He tried it once or twice without making much money or fame, but now he had organized a company of minstrels out of the live material he had found floating around New York, calling them *The California Minstrels*, and they were now about ready to start out.

Therefore it was a piece of luck for him to get Shorty, and a thousand dollars to boot, for he was undoubtedly the greatest card he could pick up anywhere.

He gave him a splendid outfit, and in due time resigned his position as sergeant of the police, and took his company out upon the road, sending an agent ahead to engage halls and do the advertising.

The first place they struck was Springfield, Massachusetts, and the first night Shorty made a tremendous hit. He was feeling first-rate, and just walked right into the good graces of the people.

The second night there was even a larger house than the first, and Polly congratulated himself that he had struck a bonanza. In reality, his company was a good one. The man who sang the sentimental songs was one of the finest artists in the profession, while the other members of the company were nearly as good in their parts.

Shorty was, of course, kept for "second part" business, that is, the acting and comic business which follows the first part, wherein the troupe appear as dandy darkeys.

But Shorty could not forget his deviltry, and was continually playing it on some member of the company, making lots of fun at the expense of somebody else, and made but few friends among his fellows. In fact, if it hadn't been for Manager Polly, he would have come to grief on more than one occasion.

But we must tell you of a joke he played on some of the sober citizens of Springfield, and on the manager as well.

The Sabbath-school belonging to one of the churches there was to give a concert for the benefit of the poor, and as the sentimental singer of Polly's troupe had become a great favorite in town, he volunteered to let him sing for them, an offer which they accepted with pleasure.

It was arranged that he should go over just after the first part, sing a song or two, and then return to finish his business.

So a carriage was sent to the hall where the minstrels were giving their show, to wait for the singer, take him to the church, and return with him.

They had fixed up a nice little stage, the entrance to which was up a flight of stairs which led from the vestry.

Shorty knew what was going on, and at once resolved to play the same game that he played on another occasion, as will be well remembered.

He waited until the first part of his show was about half over, when he went out to the waiting carriage all blacked up and ready for business, and told the driver to go as fast as he could to the church.

Arriving there he found that a quartette of young lady singers had just left the stage, and as it was understood that the sweet singer was to go on the moment he arrived, Shorty took a chair and marched upon the stage without even asking the manager whether he could do so or not.

But he wasn't greeted as he usually was, for the people didn't understand it at all.

They knew that the sweet singer belonging to the minstrels was to favor them, but how to account for the little black runt they couldn't tell.

Yet a few recognized him after a moment, and some faint applause was given, although the staid old duffers belonging to the church were evidently disgusted.

"Hallo, white folks! How you was dis ebenin'?" said he, getting up into his chair. "Thought as how I would jus' come ober heah, an' gub yer a little twist on my barnjo."

Of course the younger portion of the audience laughed at this, but the older ones looked in each other's faces, and wondered who the mischief the fellow was anyway.

But Shorty quickly had them by the ears, for he began to play "I Want to be an Angel" in splendid style.

Only for a minute, however, for just after he had got their attention, he changed to "Shoo Fly," and from that to a plantation breakdown.

Then he began to sing:

"What am de debble grumblin' 'bout?
Oh, yes; oh, yes!
Anchored in hell an' h can't get out,
Oh, yes; oh, yes!
Den wait 'til I put on de robe,
Wait 'til I put on de robe,
Wait 'til I put on de robe,
Oh, yes; oh, yes.
What am dis song dat I do sing?
Oh, yes; oh, yes!
Want ter be an angel wid a great big wing,
Oh, yes; oh, yes."

"Shame—shame!" cried several.

"Put him out," said others, but by the time he had finished the song he had changed his tune, and was now playing "Old Hundred," which smoothed them down wonderfully.

But he suddenly changed again.

"Oh, de debble am alive an' conjurer too,
Few days, few days;
He conjure me an' he conjure you,
An' I se gwine home."

Here was more trouble for the sober people, and again there was much indignation manifested all around.

"Way down in Pharoah's land,
Hoe corn, shuck corn,
Dar's whar Joseph used ter stand,
Hoe corn, shuck corn, Pharoah;
Joseph's bredder in cooked his goose,
Hoe corn, shuck corn,
But dey couldn't get a drop of juice,
Hoe corn, shuck corn, Pharoah;
Mrs. Pharoah she got sweet,
Hoe corn, shuck corn,
An' tried to get Joe off his feet,
Hoe corn, shuck corn, Pharoah."

The last verse killed them.

They began to howl and yell for somebody to put him out, and after the confusion became too loud, he tipped his chair over upon the stage and walked off.

"Who in the name of goodness are you?" asked the superintendent, who was stage manager.

"Me? I'm der sweet singer of der California Minstrels, what volunteered to help you out," replied Shorty.

"Oh, you are, eh? Well, you go back and tell your manager that we have had all we want."

"All right; anything to 'blige yer, boss."

"The idea of your coming into a church!" he sneered.

"Church? Why, I'm one of the little goody-good duffers myself. I belongs to a Sunday-school, I does."

"Yes, I guess so," replied the superintendent.

"If yer don't believe it, ax me a tough one out of der Bible."

"Oh, you clear out, now. We've had enough of you," said he, turning away.

"Somehow or other, pious people never did understand me, anyhow," he muttered, as he returned to the carriage.

He got back to the hall in time to do his business all regular, but the carriage of course returned to the church, and when the sweet singer got through with the first part, and had washed himself up nicely, he went down to take the carriage.

Of course he couldn't take it, and so, rather than miss a chance for making a hit before the ladies, he being a sort of a masher, he secured another carriage and was driven to the church.

He asked for the stage-manager, and told who he was.

"You want to get right away from here," said the disgusted superintendent.

"I do! what for?" asked the singer, in surprise.

"Because we have had all we want of your minstrel troupe to-night," said he, turning away.

"I don't understand."

"But I do, and if you don't wish me to call a policeman you will go quietly away," said he, turning abruptly from him.

Bewildered and disgusted, he returned to consult with Manager Polly.

The joke leaked out and got into the papers, but that sweet singer never forgave Shorty for taking the wind out of his sails.

After playing a week in Springfield to good houses, the troupe started for Worcester, in the same State, whither we will accompany them, and see what Shorty's next adventure will be.

CHAPTER XVIII

ARRIVING in Worcester, they put up at the Bay State House, and found themselves billed to play for a week in the Worcester Theater.

Shorty was delighted with the city, and he waddled around for some time taking it in.

It is, indeed, one of the prettiest inland cities in the United States; and, in spite of the large manufacturing business which is carried on there, it is as clean as a new pin.

At length he was approached by a hack-driver by the name of Dodge—and who that has ever lived there or been there does not know him?—and he asked him if he did not wish to be driven about the city.

Shorty was in company with Charley Pettengill at the time, and they exchanged glances. Shorty winked a slow, meaning wink to Charley.

"Well, old man, how much?" he asked, finally.

"Call it five dollars," said Dodge, looking as though he was doing them a great favor.

"Five dollars! No—no, boss. You don't understand us. We don't want to buy your team; we only want you to drive us around for awhile," said Shorty, honestly.

"Well, say three dollars."

"Three dollars for two little fellows like us?" asked Charley Pettengill.

"Yes, two orphans," put in Shorty.

"That's very cheap, gents."

"Yes, if we were going to stay out all day. But I'll tell yer what we'll do, ole man. We have a natural

desire to see you get rich, of course, but we object to assisting at sudden wealth; say two dollars, and you may snake us."

"All right; jump in."

They jumped in, and the old driver whipped up his horses.

They visited the water-works, wire factory, City Hall, State Lunatic Asylum, several large machine shops and factories, and finally they were driven past the Oread Institute, that sets back a half a mile or so from Main street, on the summit of a steep, craggy hill, and is built in the style of the old feudal castles.

After viewing all the points of interest they were driven back to the Bay State House, although Charley Pettengill got out just above, near the theater.

Now, it wouldn't have been Shorty if he couldn't play some joke as a finish to their ride, and so,

horses, and now you are mad because you are beaten."

"Confound you! I wasn't beaten by a horse!" Dodge almost screamed.

"Oh, you weren't, hey? Well, perhaps it was a cow or a stray hog," said the policeman, laughing heartily.

"Don't I tell you that you don't know so much as a sick cat?"

"Oh, I know you are mad about it. But didn't I know enough to tell you that your bloody old mules couldn't go?"

"But they can go, confound you."

"Then why don't they go?"

"Oh, you municipal idiot!" he groaned.

"Look out, old man! Don't be too free with that chin of yours, or I'll take you in," said the officer, significantly.

"But I tell you that I haven't been beaten by a

me if I don't make the next man pay in advance, if it's the mayor himself!"

He began fixing his harness while muttering to himself, and Shorty got out of the box and calmly took his place on the seat, and made believe he was asleep. Presently, Dodge, who was gritting his teeth and growling to himself, came along and looked carelessly in at the window.

"Great hugags!" he exclaimed, starting back as though he had seen a ghost. "I—I—what the devil does this mean, anyhow? Did that last glass of gin upset me like this? I say, young fellow!" he called.

Shorty woke up and rubbed his eyes.

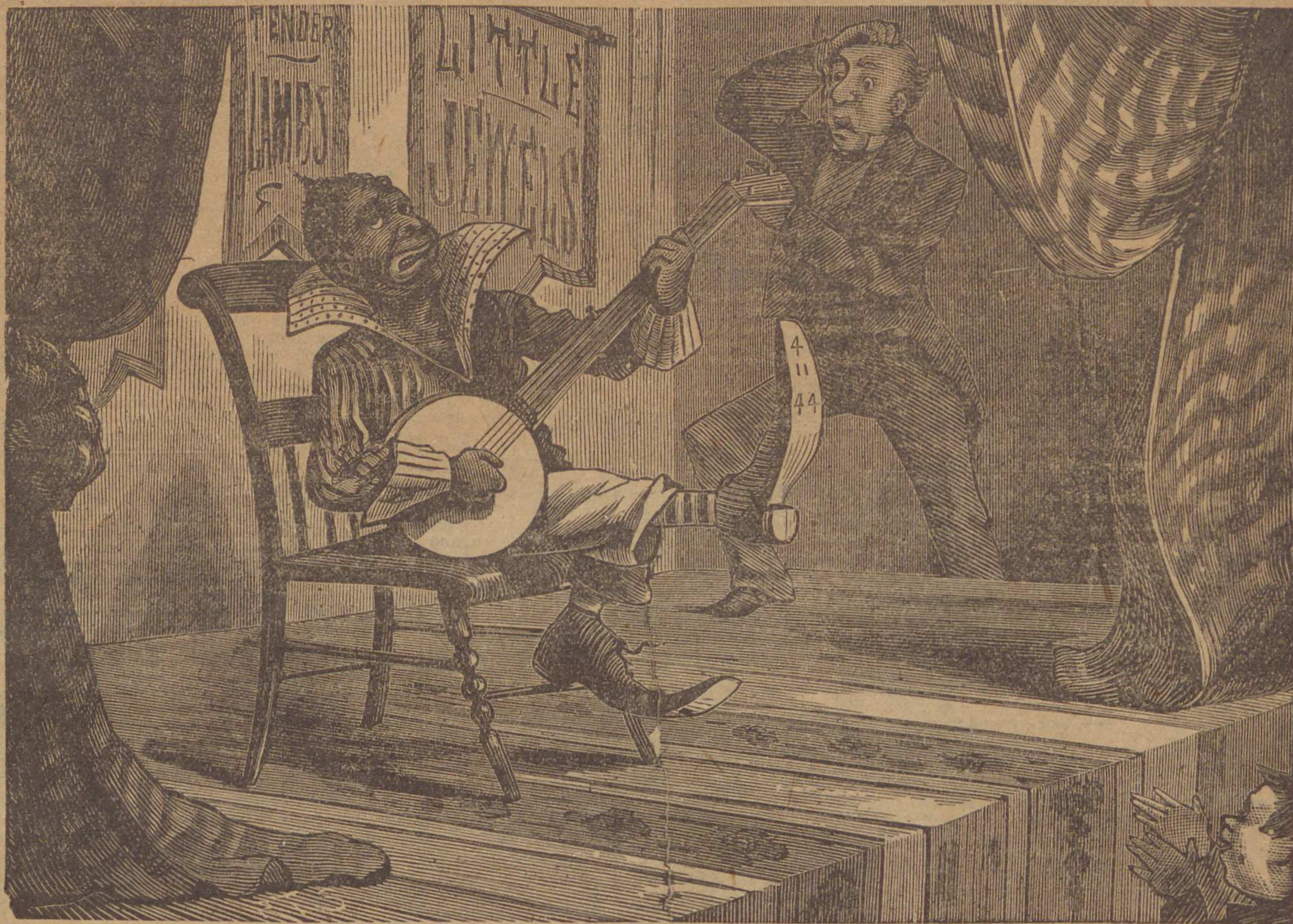
"Hallo! Got there?" he asked, looking.

"Got there—got thunder!" said Dodge.

"No, have we, though?"

"Where in thunder have you been?"

"Me? Been asleep."



"Hello, white folks! How you was dis ebenin'? Thought as how I would jus' come ober heah, an' gub yer a little twist on my barnjo."

after Dodge had started for the hotel, the little rascal lifted up the cushion of the forward seat and got into the box that was under it, and of which the cushions formed the lid.

Shutting it down he was entirely out of sight, leaving no trace of himself behind.

Driver Dodge drew briskly up to the front of the hotel, and the nearer he got there, the plainer he could feel that two dollars in his hand.

He got down from his box, and threw open the door.

Then he stepped back and threw open his mouth.

What the blue blazes did it mean? Where was that little runt whom he had closed his coach door upon five minute's before?

"By the great Bellygirth!" said he, and he took another look to see if there was any trace of his fare. "Well, I'll be hornswoggled from now to the Fourth of July! How in thunder did he escape? The doors can't be opened from the inside, and—"

He took a long look up the street as if in hopes of seeing Shorty, but of course did not.

"What's the matter, Dodge?" asked a policeman, walking up to him.

"Matter! Beaten, by thunder!" growled he.

"Beaten by Thunder. Well, I always told you that Wood's old nag, Thunder, could beat your team," replied the policeman, who pretended to know something about horseflesh.

"You be hanged!" said Dodge, impatiently.

"No, I'll be hanged if I do. I'll bet on Thunder every time."

"But you don't understand me."

"Yes, I do, you blasted old humbug. You are always blowing about the 'go' there is in your

horse, or a cow, or a hog; I have been beaten by two young fellows."

"Run ahead of you?"

"No—no; skipped without paying their fare."

"Oh, ho!" said the wise policeman, as the truth dawned upon him.

"You don't tell me that you begin to see an inch ahead of your nose?"

"Well, you see I was thinking about horses."

"And I was thinking about my fare."

"How much was it?"

"Two dollars. I drove a couple of strangers all over town; left one of them up here on the corner of Main and Pleasant streets, and started to bring the other one here. How the devil he got out of my coach I can't tell."

"Would you know them again?"

"You bet I would."

"Well, drive me back a piece, and if you see them I'll look 'em up."

"All right, get in."

The policeman rather liked the job so long as there was a ride in it, and so he sat down on the seat under which Shorty was hidden, and Dodge drove back to Main street, looking with all his eyes to see if he could find the fellows who had tricked him.

But Charley Pettengill was at that moment rehearsing in the theater, and, of course, was not to be seen; so after driving around for some time, he finally dumped the policeman out, and despondingly returned to his stand near the depot.

"Just my confounded luck," he muttered; "I was calculating to go to the theater to-night, but now I can't, and, hang me, if I don't get another job my horses will have to go without their dinner. Hang

"No; but you haven't been in this hack all the while."

"Yes, I have, boss."

"What!"

"Take my oath that I haven't been out of it since you left the other fellow up here."

"I don't believe it."

"I'll bet ten dollars."

"I know better."

"Have you got a ten as says so?"

"I'm no betting man."

"Well, what's der racket all about, anyway? Why don't you drive me ter der hotel?"

"You pay me two dollars."

"Not much."

"What! I'll have you arrested."

"No you won't, ole man."

"I won't?"

"Drive me ter der hotel, as yer 'greed ter, den I'll pay yer."

"Oh, you will, eh?"

"Of course I will. What der yer take me for—a beat?" demanded Shorty, indignantly.

"Well, all right, I'll drive you; but mind, now, no tricks."

"Tricks! Yer been histin' this morning, I guess. What der yer mean by tricks? Guess your der party what's up ter tricks. Go on, now."

Dodge was utterly bewildered, and Shorty's coolness made him more so.

What the mischief it all meant was more than he could get through his hair.

After making sure that both doors were secure, he mounted his box and started once more for the Bay State House.

Shorty rolled and tumbled in excess of laughter, and finally, after having ridden two or three blocks,

he lifted up the seat again, and once more disappeared from sight.

Driving up to the hotel, the old man got down with a look of slight relief in his face to let out his passenger and collect his well-earned two dollars.

He threw open the door and looked in.

Great Jehosaphat! He was gone again.

He was completely staggered this time, and leaned against his coach for support.

"I—I think there's something wrong with me. Wonder if I've had any passengers anyway? Guess I must be out of my head," and he took off his hat and wiped his forehead mournfully.

One of the hotel porters who had noticed the hackman's strange behavior on both occasions came out to the carriage.

"What's the matter with you, Dodge?"

"I don't know, I give it up," he replied, sadly, shaking his puzzled head.

"You are acting confounded strange to-day, anyway. This is the second time you have driven up to the sidewalk and opened the door of your hack, just as though you had a passenger. What's up?"

Again the old man shook his head.

Just then the same policeman came along.

"What is it now, Dodge? Beaten again?"

Dodge looked at him vacantly.

"I think the old man is off his nut to-day. This is the second time he has driven up here and opened his door just as though letting out a passenger," said the porter.

"What's the trouble with you? Been drinking?" asked the policeman, quizzingly.

"Drink? No; but I'll be hanged if I think I am well, somehow."

"Why, what is it?"

He related his experience after leaving the officer until then.

"What do you make of it?" he asked.

"Make of it? Why, I think you're off your nut pretty bad. Better go home and take a sleep."

"I'll take my oath he was in there."

"Oh, you'll be taking your oath that you see snakes and things presently. Better go home and take a rest."

The old man stood thinking for a moment, and then, taking another look into his coach, he closed the door and slowly mounted the box.

"Better go home, old man," said the policeman.

Dodge made no reply.

He was too much occupied with his own thoughts. "Guess the old man has been histing pretty lively lately," said the porter, as he drove back towards his stand.

"Guess so; he was trying to tell me, a little while ago, that he had been driving a couple of strangers around town to see the sights, and that they had disappeared in some mysterious manner just as he arrived here."

"Too bad. Better keep an eye on him."

"I shall do so," replied the officer, walking away in the same direction that Dodge was going.

Shorty was enjoying all this, and just as soon as the hack started back, he got out of the box and again took his seat as usual, looking as honest as a goat.

Dodge drove back to his stand and stopped; but he did not get down from his box.

He was too busy with his thoughts.

He sat there debating with himself whether he should go and see a doctor or not.

"Hallo, driver!" yelled Shorty, looking out of the window.

The old fellow leaped to his feet as though a pound of dynamite had exploded under him.

The hair stood up all over his head, and his eyes stuck out like a pair of boiled eggs.

He started to run away.

"Hallo! Come back here!" yelled Shorty, and this made him stop and look around.

"I say, how much longer are you going ter fool around wid me? I think yer crazy."

The old man approached slowly and cautiously.

"Why don't you drive me to der hotel?"

"I—I—" he stammered.

"If yer arn't a goin' ter do it, say so, an' I'll walk. I can't be foolin' round wid you all day. Say!"

"I did drive you down there twice," said he, at length.

"Git out, what der yer take me for? What are you giving me, ole man, lasses on a shoe string? Git along down, now, or I'll kick."

The puzzled driver wiped his brow, and looked as though he was for sale cheap, team thrown in.

"I think there is something wrong," said he.

"I should say so; what are ye histin me in for—a sucker?" demanded Shorty.

"I guess you'd better walk."

"All right."

"I'm not feeling very well to-day."

"I should say so," said Shorty, starting as though to get out of the carriage.

"Stop, I'll try it once more. But I'll put somebody in with you."

"Anything, so you get on."

Dodge went into a harness shop close by and asked a young fellow who worked there to get into his coach and ride down to the Bay State. This being quickly arranged he once more mounted his box and started to finish his job.

This time there was no trouble, although Shorty gave his stranger companion a history of what had taken place, and telling him who he was, he presented him with a couple of tickets for the show, and then informed him of the joke he had been playing on the old man for the past hour.

Arriving at the hotel quite a crowd soon collected,

for the story of Dodge's supposed insanity had been freely told, and seeing his carriage drive up again, it was supposed that he was once more to go through the same performance.

"That's all right, ole man. Here's yer money, an' here's a couple of tickets for der show ter-night. Come an' see me," said Shorty, waddling into the hotel.

A smile crept over the old hackman's face, as he looked at the money and tickets, while the crowd, who asked and learned particulars, was not slow in believing that some kind of a joke had been played upon them.

Shorty gave it away in the hotel, and the young fellow who had ridden with him gave it away in other localities, so by night the racket was pretty well known all over town, and not only added to Shorty's reputation, but created many a laugh at the expense of the old hackman, who was known to everybody in the city.

Eph Horn was with the company, and his great fame was enough to draw a good house, to say nothing of the interest that Shorty's little racket had awakened, and the result was that the theater was filled in every part that night with the best people of Worcester.

Neither Eph or Shorty were in the first part, and while that was going on Shorty related his adventure to the old star, which pleased him greatly.

"Good enough, Shorty; we can fake up an act on that and make a hit," said Eph.

"How?"

"Never mind, I'll show you," and he proceeded to fix up a little act that was not down on the bills, but worked into an act which they had together, which was on the bill.

The first part was very satisfactory, and Eph Horn, in a little piece by himself, of course made a hit, for he is a great favorite East.

But when Shorty came on, the cheers were almost deafening.

This was a simple banjo act which came before the piece that they had arranged between them, and he at once proceeded to execute it in his own inimitable manner.

Perching himself upon a chair, with his little banjo, but a rattling good one, he began:

"Old man, old man, what you doin' dar?"

Sittin' on my hack-box tryin' to find my fare!"

This did not finish the verse as he intended to sing it, but the audience broke out into a storm of applause which completely drowned all further attempts, for they had all heard about the joke, and it was too good for to keep quiet over.

Mr. Dodge was there, and the way his numerous friends and acquaintances did go for him was a caution to wheels.

The remainder of the song was not heard that night, for there was no such thing as keeping the crowd still enough to hear the other verses, and so Shorty had to bow himself off after each recall, and another scene for another act was run on.

It was a tremendous ovation; but all at the expense of poor Dodge, who took it as good-naturedly as possible.

Then came Eph Horn and Shorty. Another member of the company had been fixed up to represent the policeman, and for fifteen minutes, Eph, representing Dodge, the hackman, there was fun by the bushel.

It was a most decided hit, a local one, of course, and the next day it was placed upon the bills as a regular act, and a full account of the sell published in the *Worcester Spy*.

This, of course, carried the thing out to its fullest, and the result was, greatly to the delight of Manager Polly, another bang-jammed house.

Dodge had been furnished with tickets for the sake of having him there, and when the "Artful Dodger" was brought on, there was even a greater demonstration than there had been the night before.

And so the show was good for a week at least, the time that they had calculated on at the start, although very few showmen were there who would prophesy over two days of paying business, Worcester not being regarded as much of a "show-town."

But of course Shorty was the hero of the company on account of the racket he had with poor old Dodge, who has not heard the last of it, even to this day, if he is yet alive.

But this young rascal could not keep quiet under any circumstances, for the more fun he had the more he wanted, and the more deviltry he succeeded in, the more he was after.

The third day of their stay there, he managed to get up a bit of fun in front of the hotel, that made more fun for him and members of the troupe than it did for the victims.

In his changing experience he had noticed, as almost everybody else has, that but few people can resist the temptation to kick an old hat, whenever they see it laying around.

Knowing this, and being hard up for something new, he obtained an old plug hat of one of the porters and placed it upon the sidewalk in front of the hotel, but without anything in it, as is usually the case in such rackets.

He gave it one or two kicks himself with his little stumpy legs, and presently several people became interested in it, and gave it charitable kicks as they passed along.

But this kind of fun was too one-sided to please Shorty.

It was too much on the side of the kickers, and nothing for the poor old hat, to speak of, unless one can imagine that an old hat feels honored by being kicked.

So he stole quietly out, and set it up again in front of the hotel, and just to make it all the more interesting, he placed a brick in it.

Those who had observed this improvement, stepped back into the hotel, and waited for developments.

But they didn't have to wait long, for in less than three minutes an old fellow came along with his wife on his arm and espied the hat.

"Wait a moment, Mariar," said he, releasing her arm from his.

What's the matter, Josiah?" she asked.

"Do you see that old hat?" he asked, pointing to the prepared cady. "Oh, I guess not! I haven't had a kick at a hat in ten years," and he approached it with a two-story grin, and began to dance around it in the most carressing and loving manner, preparatory to sending it with a kick at least fifty feet in the air.

"Josiah, what is the matter with you?"

"Oh, keep quiet, Mariar. See me hist it!" said the old man, and after skirmishing around a moment longer, he poised himself on one leg an instant, and then he gave it a kick that certainly would have sent it over the Bay State House had it not been for the brick.

The next instant the old fellow grabbed his foot in his two hands, and began dancing around on the sidewalk on one leg, and howling like a cheated Indian, while his wife followed him up with the greatest anxiety.

"What is it, Josiah?"

"Hellenblazes! Jamnation!" was his hot reply, as he continued to dance.

"What did you do?"

"Kicked—kicked thunder and lightning!"

"I should think so."

By this time those inside had become so convulsed with laughter that they could no longer hold in, and a jolly roar went up.

The old man dropped to it in an instant.

"I can whollop the stuffing out of any body-shaker in that hotel!" he yelled. "Come out here and give the old man a show. I can beat the beeswax out of any dozen of you. Oh, if somebody will only ramble out here!"

"Josiah, come along. Only think," said his wife.

"Confound it, I was thinking. I'm an alderman of this city, and what I want to know is, if such things are to be tolerated in a free and enlightened community. Will some of those grinning idiots come out here and see me? Will somebody attempt to argue this thing with me? Is there any liberty in this state? Did our forefathers bleed and die for nothing?"

"Come along, Josiah; let us go," said his greatly-exercised wife.

With the greatest difficulty she succeeded in getting him to hobble away with her; and then a policeman came along and threw the hat into an ash barrel, at the same time warning Shorty and his friends that that sort of a thing was played out in the free State of Massachusetts, and that they must put for cover.

But the affair made lots of fun, and with a certain class it helped to increase Shorty's reputation, and filled the houses with those who were curious to see the author of so much mischief.

At the end of a week the troupe started for Providence, Rhode Island, and hoping to have some more fun there, we will wait until the next chapter to see what turns up.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE California Minstrels, of which our hero, Shorty, was a member, arrived in Providence, by the way of the Providence and Worcester Railroad, on the day following their departure from Worcester, where they had such good fortune and so much fun.

Shorty was up to his pranks as usual, and when there was no other victim to be found he was sure to take some member of the company, on account of which he was regarded by them as a sort of a pest, and one or two of them would have gladly taken him by the heels and shook the mischief out of him.

But they stood in fear of the manager, who was not only Shorty's friend, but regarded him as the biggest card he had, although, to tell the truth, he often rebuked him for his deviltry, which did just about as much good, of course, as it would to squirt water against the wind.

Eph Horn took a great fancy to him, and together they visited places of interest in the beautiful city, where he introduced him to the many acquaintances whom he met there, being then, as he had been for years, a great favorite there.

They soon found that Shorty's fame had preceded him, and that the account of his racket with Dodge, the hack-driver, at Worcester, had been copied into the Providence papers, and had occasioned a great many laughs; so when Eph introduced the hero of the affair, he was received with smiling and earnest demonstrations.

The story had been so well connected with the regular advertising of the show, that the public dropped to it at once, and the first night they opened, the museum was crowded in every part, and Manager Polly found that, after all, Shorty's pranks

are doing more for him than almost any amount of ordinary advertising.

He was received with a tremendous storm of applause when he made his first appearance, and in another act, where he and Eph Horn appeared together, it was hard to say which of them was the greatest favorite, the veteran or the boy.

But the act between them was so comical that I will give it.

The reader will remember that one of Shorty's greatest part was in the character of a big monkey, and with this Eph arranged the act as follows. It was called on the bills:

"THE MUSICAL MONK."

Eph comes on as an old man speaking to his son, who was about to return to spend the Christmas holidays, having been away a long time to South America. While he is speaking the voice of his son

He leaps up on the table where the banjo lays, just as the old man returns alone.

"What a nice boy dat Sam hab got ter be. He's gwine down fo' ter see de neighbors, an' tole me fo' ter come in an' mind de monkey. Wonder whare he am?"

He turns and beholds him on the table.

"Hoecake an' lasses! He hab got inter my Sabby day close. Come out of dem harness? Come out, or I'll harm ye! De idea ob a monkey wearin' a nigger's close! Come out!" he cried.

"Oh, pull down your vest, old man!" said Shorty, taking up the banjo.

The exclamations and alarm of the old darkey were comical to behold.

But he gradually recovers himself, and concludes that Sam must have learned him to talk.

"Put down dat barnjo! Dat 'longs ter Sam," he said, as Shorty began tossing it up and down.

standing up, and seemed to be determined to see them, Manager Poliy sent word for them to go before the curtain.

Eph was ready, and stood waiting for Shorty, who came running from his dressing-room. Without noticing anything particular about him, he took him by the hand, and pulling aside the curtain, led him out before it.

A wild clapping of hands and shouting greeted them the moment they appeared, and this being particularly directed at Shorty, Eph stooped and took a look at him.

Good gracious! No wonder the people laughed, for one side of Shorty's mug was black, and the other white, divided through the center of the nose, one half of it being natural, and the other as black as burnt cork could make it.

Eph could but laugh himself as he bowed, and shoved the little joker off.



"Hello, driver!" yelled Shorty, looking out of the window. The old fellow leaped from his seat as though a pound of dynamite had exploded under him.

is heard speaking outside.

"Oh, by Golly, dar he come!" exclaims the old man, turning to meet him.

The meeting between them is very cordial, of course, and after remarking how he had grown during his absence, they sit down to talk.

The son tells him where he has been and what he has seen in the foreign lands he has visited; how he has learned to play the banjo, and several other things.

The old man is of course delighted, and insists upon his producing the banjo and playing him a tune on it. This he does, and he is delighted to such a degree that he almost forgets his lameness.

"And I have brought you home a big monkey," says the son.

"Any ob our 'lations?"

"No, I guess not, daddy, but he's the boss monk," says the son, and he proceeds to tell him all about the tricks he can do and what lots of company he will be when he goes away again.

Shorty, as the monkey, is then introduced and put through several amusing tricks, greatly to the delight of the old man and the audience.

"I tole you what it am, Sam, dat monkey knows almost enough fo' ter vote," said the old father, and then followed a lot of local or timely hits at the political situation which kept the house in a roar.

Then the old man says that he must show him around, and they both go off, leaving Shorty alone on the stage.

Here he cuts up any number of tricks.

At length he finds the old man's Sunday hat, and puts it on; also a coat, and in various amusing ways and places, he finally contrives to get a complete suit.

"You break dat barnjo an' Sam break your head."

"Go shoot yourself," replied Shorty, at the same time commencing to play upon the banjo.

The comical features of this part must be seen to be appreciated, for no mere description can do them justice.

The old man walks carefully around him with any number of comical sayings, and finally concludes that Sam has also taught him to play the banjo, and that he is about as smart as any child he ever had.

Finally the music begins to work upon him.

"I know dat dat monk am one ob my family, he 'fects me so; I came mighty nea' forgettin' my rheumatics an' dancin' when Sam was a playin', an' now if dis yer thing keeps on, I—I know dat I shall. Oh! it makes de ole man feel so coltish 'round de legs!" and he gradually gets into motion in time with the music.

At length, and all the while keeping the audience in a roar, he loses control of himself, forgets his rheumatism, and begins to dance a break-down, giving expression to various comical sayings while doing so.

The effect was uproarious, and while the thing is at its height, in comes Sam, with looks of astonishment on his face, and the scene is closed in, and the act ends.

Hearty rounds of applause followed, which told how well the thing was appreciated by the people of Providence.

But they were not disposed to give him up in this way, and after the next act by the remaining members of the company, and which was the last on the bill, there were loud calls for Shorty and Eph Horn.

This became very loud, and as the audience were

This brought the performance to a close, and the audience retired, each with his money's worth. And so it was every night for a week, Shorty carrying off all the honors.

This, of course, created some jealousy among other members of the company, especially the younger ones, and on this account, together with the old grudge which they had in against him, made them put their heads together to see if they couldn't play some joke on him. The fact was, as they thought, that he was having altogether too good a time, and too much of it at their expense, both professionally and by way of his many rackets on them.

So they put up a job on him in this way:

It was the last night they were going to show in Providence, and they concluded that would be the best time to work it.

He and Eph were not to play *The Musical Monk* that night, but Shorty was to give a banjo solo instead. He was dressed like a plantation darkey, and around his waist he wore a stout leather strap to hold his trousers up.

The conspirators arranged a pulley and a rope that was used in working the scenery sometimes, and had it all in readiness for his last encore, for he generally had three or four every night.

The pulley was securely fastened away up in the scenes out of sight. On one end of the rope running through it there was an iron hook, while the other end was hidden from sight behind the scene just back of where he sat.

Shorty had been called out for the third time, and, taking a seat on the little stool that he used when he played the banjo, he began a rollicking jig of some sort, and was getting along bravely as usual, when one of the company, taking the hook

from where it had been fixed out of sight, stole quietly upon the stage just back of his stool.

The audience, of course, thought this was a part of the act, and before he knew what was going on the revengeful minstrel had inserted the hook under Shorty's belt, and then darted off.

In an instant the signal was given, and those having hold of the other end of the rope pulled like good fellows, and the next instant Shorty was dangling in the air.

"Oh—oh, wal!" he yelled, dropping his banjo in his fright.

Out of sight he went, quicker than a mule could kick, all the while roaring like a young bull until he was away up in the "flies" and sky borders out of sight and hearing.

The audience first howled with delight, for it never once occurred to them that this sudden and unusual exit was not a part of the act.

They thought it exceedingly funny, but Shorty didn't.

Not much.

A scene was sent on in front of the one where he had been performing, and then those having hold of the rope, and still out of sight, lowered the poor devil down to the stage again, quite as mysteriously as he had been hoisted.

Manager Polly witnessed the affair from the front of the house where he happened to be at the time, and he hurried around behind the scenes.

As Shorty came down Eph Horn came from his dressing-room to see what the trouble was.

"What is up, Shorty?"

"I was, a moment ago," said he, unhooking the rope from his belt.

"What's the matter, got a new act?"

"Hanged if I know; it's new ter me."

"Where have you been?"

"Up in der flies."

"What for?"

"Well, some of them bloody hamfatters have been playing me for fish-bait," growled he.

"Fish-bait! what do you mean?" asked Eph, coming closer, for he was not one of the conspirators and knew nothing about it.

"See dat hook an' line?"

"Yes, what of it?"

"Well, they hooked me in der belt wid it and bounced me up to the skies, biff!"

"Oh, a racket, eh?" said Eph, laughing.

"Well, I should say so; took me right off der stage when I doing my banjo act."

"Thunder and Christmas! that's the greatest 'finish' I ever heard of; why, they just yelled in front," he added.

"An' I'll make 'em yell behind, too," said he, pointing back to where he heard some of the fellows laughing, "I'll get hunk wid them snoozers yet, see if don't," he added, starting for his dressing-room.

Shorty had nothing further to do that night, and so he at once began to wash up, but all the while as mad as a pig in a cold rain; in fact, it was the worst racket that had been played on him since they started out together, and as he had been having it all his own way thus far, it cut him worse than it would have done under almost any other circumstances.

Manager Polly hastened to his room to see if he had been hurt, being naturally solicitous for the welfare of his best card.

"What the dickens happened you, Shorty? What sort of a finish was that?" he asked.

"A finish on der fly, I guess," he muttered.

"But what was it?"

"Oh, some of dem hamfatters played a racket on me, dat's all."

"Ah, ha! Getting square with you, hey?" said Polly, laughing.

"Well, all right, but if I don't make dem chaps tick, yer can't bait an eel pot wid me."

"Better look out, ole man, they are ten against you, remember that."

"Now, never you mind, boss. Leave me ter play my game. I'll make 'em sick, you see!"

The manager laughed and went away.

There were many hearty laughs over the racket that had been played on Shorty, and although he could not find out exactly who worked the thing, he was obliged to put up with their laughs and guys, regarding what they were pleased to call his "Aerial finish," as best he could; but he was bound to get even if it took him a lifetime.

This was Saturday night, and the troupe was to remain in Providence over Sunday. So, after the show, they sauntered off in different directions in quest of pleasure.

Shorty and Eph Horn went to a lager beer saloon, where they had a few glasses of the foaming beverage, and then returned to their hotel.

Right next to him roomed the "sweet singer," and the guitar-player, two very dandified fellows, and whom he suspected of working the racket on him to pay for the trick he had played on them in Springfield.

The door of their room was locked, but Shorty's key would unlock it, and knowing this he resolved to have a little fun at their expense, so he provided himself with a little saw and went into the room, well-knowing that it would be late when they returned that night.

Rolling up the mattresses he sawed the slats of the two beds almost off, so that even less than the weight of either of them would break down the whole affair, and then replacing the beds he stole back to his own room and secreted the saw with which he had done the work.

Then a smile began to lighten his mug, the first one that had shown itself since he had been jerked up so unexpectedly.

"Well, that'll pay part of it," he mused, and then suddenly remembering that he could improve upon the affair, he went out and to a drug store across the way and bought an ounce of red pepper, full strength.

Taking this to the room he placed a lot of it between the sheets of the two beds and under the pillows, where it would be sure to be disturbed when the break down took place.

This fixed he returned to his own room, and had hardly gotten into the bed before Eph Horn, who shared it with him, came in, tired and sleepy.

About two o'clock the two fellows for whose benefit Shorty had been working so diligently, came in, gloriously full of beer, and feeling as fine as feathers.

They began to undress, all the while talking and laughing about the joke they had played on Shorty, and the fun of it was, he lay awake and could hear every word they said.

"I guess he'll drop on himself, now," said the sweet singer.

"If he don't we'll give him a higher bounce next time," said the guitar player.

"Oh, but I thought I should explode when he yelled and dropped his banjo," said the other, laughing.

"I wonder what the devil he thought had got him?" and then the other fellow laughed.

And then Shorty laughed as the idea occurred to him what they would think had them in a few minutes more.

"But the funniest part of the affair was, that the audience thought it was part of the piece."

"Yes, a new finish."

"Exactly. Oh, it was awful funny."

"Yes, devilish funny!" muttered Shorty.

By this time they had both got undressed, and turning out the gas, they both leaped into bed at the same time.

And they both went straight through their beds at the same time, with a crash, yell, snap, bang, bump, that awakened nearly every one in the hotel.

Eph Horn leaped clear out of bed and stood with his arms up as though warding off some coming danger, evidently thinking that the house was falling down.

The two bounced minstrels yelled about thirteen kinds of bloody murder and struggled to free themselves from the ruins of their beds, and this of course stirred up the red pepper, and sneezing was the next thing in order.

"Help—help—help!" shouted "the sweet singer," sneezing between every word.

"What the devil is this, anyway?" said the musician, sneezing in the same way.

"Oh, I—more sneezing."

"What in thunder—" double sneezing.

"What's the row in there?" demanded Eph.

"There's the d—l to pay—artechehol!"

"What's up?" he demanded again.

"We are down."

"Strike a light."

"Send for the landlord."

"Send for a doctor or we shall sneeze our heads off."

"Help!"

"Let us out."

They were sneezing so violently that they had much difficulty in doing anything else, and in the meantime the porter was rapping on the door and inquiring what the matter was.

A light was got after much difficulty, and the door opened to about a dozen curious persons who had gathered in the hall.

"Is their murther's goin' on here?" demanded the porter, going cautiously in.

"I guess so," said the sweet singer, between his sneezes.

His companion couldn't say anything, but going to the window he threw it open, thus allowing the draft to take the pepper out into the hall and among those who were crowding in at the door.

Then there was wholesale sneezing; sneezing in job lots; sneezing in chorus; musical and unmusical sneezes; whoopings and howls of pain, and a general rubbing of noses, as the potent pepper began to circulate.

The two original victims pointed to the beds as though to ask the porter what it meant. But he was sneezing in Irish, and hadn't time to make any reply.

Then the clerk and the landlord came up, and, in fact, the whole house was aroused and madly inquiring what the riot was all about.

"What's the matter, Teddy?" demanded the landlord.

"Mather is it?—artichool! Faith, there seems ter be the divil up here, sur," said he, and then he resumed his sneezing.

"What is the trouble?" he asked, of the victims, but before they could reply he had caught the general complaint, and was sneezing as loudly and earnestly as any of them.

In a few moments the pepper seemed to have gone all over the house, and hardly a person in it was there who was not going through with some gymnastic performance, either to suppress a rising sneeze or give vent to one gracefully.

An old maid on the floor above, who had poked her head out of her door to hear what was going on, got a dose of it and sneezed a set of false teeth out of her jaws, and then she jawed at everybody in

the world, and the inhabitants of the moon, and yet could get at no solution of the mystery.

A man, a few rooms away, sneezed his wife out of bed, and she went for his hair to pay for it. Another sneezed his wooden leg out of joint, while a poodle dog on the same floor sneezed his collar off, and choked himself to death in doing it.

It was the worst old shaking that ever a hotel got, and Shorty, while coming in for a little of it himself, concluded there was more power in an ounce of red pepper than there was in a keg of powder.

But there was no such thing as getting at the meaning of the trouble, although the sneezing "sweet singer" attempted to show the landlord what had happened to the bed.

He, however, could not understand what it all meant, and in order to save the top of his head from being jerked off by sneezing, he turned and went away, at the same time informing them that they had undoubtedly did it themselves for a lark, and that they would have to pay all damages arising from it.

This was but little consolation, but getting into their clothes, they went down stairs, and after stating the case to the clerk, managed to persuade him to give them another room.

But, oh! how sick they were. Shorty concluded that he was about square.

They examined the beds of their new room before undressing to make sure that everything was all right, and then with smarting eyes and noses, they began to prepare for sleep.

"What do you make of it, Tom?" asked the guitar player.

"I'll be hanged if I don't give it up, Frank. Are you sure that the door was locked?"

"Certainly; you saw me unlock it when we went up."

"I suspect that somebody played a trick on us."

"Do you think so?"

"What else could it be?"

"It does seem like it."

"Fixed the bed slats and put pepper or snuff under the clothing. See?"

"Oh, but it must have been pepper, for I can get away with snuff all right. But, Lord Moses! I have sneezed both of my ears and my nose out of joint."

"But who could have done it?"

"Perhaps the chambermaid."

"For what?"

"A lark, of course."

"Nonsense: a quiet old thing like her never would think of such a racket."

"How about Shorty?"

"Shorty?"

"You know he said he'd get even."

"Yes, but—"

"I'll bet he did it."

"Great thunder-bugs!"

"If he did—"

"And we can prove it—"

"Oh, the devil! Don't say a word about it. If it was Shorty, he has got one the best of us after all; and the more we say about it the more we shall get laughed at."

"That's so. Drop it."

"Gracious! yes."

Shorty was rolling and laughing in his bed, and he gave way to it to such a degree, that Eph Horn dropped to it, and accused him of doing the job.

CHAPTER XX.

FROM Providence, the California Minstrel Troupe and Shorty were to go to Boston, where they had engaged to play two weeks at the Howard Athenaeum, and on Monday, following the events of the last paper, they set out for the New England metropolis.

Shorty did not attempt to deny to Eph Horn that he had played the trick on the "sweet singer" and the guitar player at the hotel in Providence; but Eph never gave it directly away, although it was pretty generally known among the troupe who had put up the job.

Shorty had a debt to pay for the racket they had worked on him at the Providence Museum, and he paid it; and, what was better, they knew it much better than they would acknowledge.

The ride to Boston was uneventful for the most part, although Shorty was continually on the lookout for anything that might turn up, as he always was.

At length, after they were about half way there, a very timid old lady got in, and worked her way nervously along to the only vacant seat, which happened to be partially filled by Shorty.

He cocked his eye up at her in the most comical way, and grinned like a monkey. She looked at him in a half-scared, half-inquiring sort of a way, and then at the other occupants of the car, and seemingly hardly certain whether to sit down or not.

But just then the train started with a sudden jerk, and she put in an involuntary set down that nearly dislocated the seat.

"Oh!" exclaimed Shorty.

"What is it?" she inquired, springing to her feet.

"Nothing, ma'am."

"Then what made you yell?" she asked, looking at him sharply.

"Cause I thought it hurt yer."

"Oh, well, I can do my own hollering if I get hurt, sonny," and she again got back into her seat.

"That's all right, ma'am; I didn't know but you'd be dumb, an' couldn't."

By this time the train had got pretty well in motion again, and was bowling along at a good rate of speed, which very much affected the nervous old lady, who gazed anxiously around.

Shorty was piping her off, and several of the troupe were watching them both.

"I say, sonny—" she started to say.

"Don't call me 'sonny,' if yer please, ma'am."

"Why not?"

"Because I am as old as you be."

"Gracious! You don't say so?" she exclaimed, suddenly becoming interested in him.

"Fact."

"Dwarf?"

"No; was full size once."

"Shaw! what happened you?"

"Railroad accident," said he, with a sigh.

"Good gracious! you don't say so?"

"Fact, I assure you, ma'am."

"Putty tough, you'd better believe."

"I dare say. But what I mean is how could it have changed your size so?"

"Oh, the cars telescoped."

"Done what?"

"Punched one into another like a telescope, until the whole train, engine an' all, was in one car," said Shorty, with the coolness of a veteran.

"Heaven save us! You don't say so?"

Shorty winked at her and nodded his head.

"Must have been a good many killed?"

"Everybody on the train killed but me, ma'am." Heavens upon earth. All but you?"

Again Shorty nodded.

"And what did it do to you?"

"Telescoped me."

"What?"

"Shoved me together same as it did the cars,"

winks, and as he knew him very well, he concluded that he had got the old lady on some sort of a "string," and so hastened to assure her that everything was all right.

"Dreadful thing, this being telescoped, aren't it?" she asked, handing her ticket.

"Very sad thing, ma'am."

"Do be careful, Mister Conductor, won't you?"

"Oh, certainly."

"And don't forget to put me off at Milbury. Going there to visit my daughter, and I don't want to get telescoped or anything of that kind."

"Oh, that's all right. I'll see that you don't get telescoped, ma'am," said he, passing along with a grin on his face so large that all the passengers in the vicinity took a piece, and then he had quite enough left to set another car to laughing.

"That's ther way with them conductors; they always say how careful they'll be, but they can't



Out of sight he went quicker than a mule could kick, all the while roaring like a young bull, until he was away into the flies.

"Oh, my! How did it happen?"

"Collision."

"Where?"

"On a railroad."

"Yes, but where?"

"On this very road."

"Oh, my!" she exclaimed, starting up and gazing anxiously around. "Is there any danger?"

"Not yet, I guess; not 'til we get ter goin'."

"Going! Heavenly rest! Going! Don't you call this going?" she asked, eagerly.

"Oh, no; go ten times faster'n this after we get out a piece," said Shorty, looking at her with a grin.

"Oh, preachers! You don't say so? Seems as though we were going like lightning now."

"Well, so we are, but we go like greased lightning by'm-by."

"Oh, my! Wish I'd stay'd at home, or gone with the horse and wagon."

"Ever traveled much by rail?"

"Only rode on them a little ways once before, but they didn't go so fast as this. It was a passenger-car hitched on behind a freight train; that's all. You used to see 'em?"

"Oh, yes; traveled around the world in 'em."

"Du tell."

"Oh, I'm an old stager."

"I should say so. But how'd you get hurt so?"

"Hurt, how?"

"Why, you say you was big as anybody once."

"Yes."

"Well, how did it happen?"

"That I was as big as anybody? Growned."

"No. How did it happen that you got so little?"

"Railroad accident, I told yer, ma'am."

"Yes, I know. But how was it?"

replied Shorty, which brought the old lady to her feet.

"Shoved you together?"

"Same's you see me, ma'am."

"Preachers defend us. And couldn't you get stretched out again?"

"No, ma'am. Been to every big doctor in the world, but it's no use. Can't do nothing for me."

"Heavens upon earth."

"But that arn't the wust of it."

"What is it?"

"Nobody don't know me."

"Well, I don't wonder."

"Wife an' five children refused to recognize me. Wife went into mourning, and afterwards married another man. Had a rich father, an' he wouldn't recognize me, but gave all his property to my cousins, and put up a tombstone over some other fellow's remains, and swore that they were mine, an' bounced me into jail for claiming to be myself."

"Well, I declare!"

"My old friends and companions laughed at me because I told 'em who I was, and ever since they don't call me anything but 'Shorty.'"

"Heaven save us and bless us."

Just then the conductor touched her on the shoulder, and yelled "tickets" so loud that it nearly finished the half-frightened woman right there in her seat.

"Oh, my! What has happened?" she exclaimed.

"I have happened along to take up your ticket," said the conductor, smiling.

"Oh, is that all? I thought something dreadful had happened, same as when this poor man got telescoped," said she, fumbling in her bag for the ticket.

Shorty gave the conductor one of his comical

help it. It's the engineers' fault," said Shorty, when the conductor had gone.

"I suppose so. But I feel better since he told me it's all right. Where are you going?"

"Ter Boston."

"What for?"

"Well, I've got tired of living this way, an' so I'm goin' on there to let the doctors cut me up, and see if they can't straighten me out."

"You don't say so?"

"Yes."

"But maybe they'll kill you."

"Well, I don't care. I'd rather be dead than be shut up this way all my life. They can't but kill me, and maybe they'll be able to lengthen me out again."

"I hope they will, I'm sure. And if they do, I suppose you will go for that chap that married your wife?"

"You bet," said he, with another of his comical winks at her—"that is, if they make me look natural."

"Oh, I hope they will. What do you do for a living now?"

"Go 'round playing the banjo," said he, taking up his instrument which stood in its green bairn bag by his side.

"Du tell. Make much by it?"

"Oh, yes. It don't take much to keep me."

"Now, do you know, I've taken an uncommon interest in you. I haven't much money to spare, but I've lots of pluck and feeling, and if you'll only play a few tunes, I'll pass around the hat and take up a collection for you in the car."

"All right, thank you, if yer don't mind doin' it," he said, taking out his banjo.

"Gracious, no. I never mind helping a poor fel-

low-creature. You just go ahead, and I bet I'll make these folks give down."

Shorty removed the banjo from its bag and gave the wink to other members of the troupe, who sat around watching him.

Those who sat in the seats before and behind him had enjoyed the racket quite as much as Shorty had, for both he and the old lady spoke loud enough to be heard several seats around.

A few preliminary chords attracted all eyes, and then mounting on the top edge of the car seat, he began to play a rollicking jig, to which everybody paid particular attention, for Shorty had become a first-class player on his favorite instrument.

He rattled through half a dozen, and at the end of each he received generous applause from clapping of hands.

The old woman was herself greatly delighted, and when he struck up "Hey, Jim, Jim along Josey," she leaped to her feet; seized Shorty's hat, and started with it through the car, telling the passengers about the unfortunate telescoped man who had now to depend upon his musical ability for a living.

It was the wildest lark that had ever been started in a rail-car, and not only members of the troupe, but nearly all of the other passengers laughed over it as though they would split, although the old woman was wholly in earnest, and so much occupied with her charitable work, and balancing herself in the swaying, headlong car, that she did not notice the laughter, or think any more about the danger of railroad traveling.

She had something to say to every one almost regarding the poor telescoped minstrel, and whether they believed or understood it, they saw that she was thoroughly in earnest, and so gave her quite a generous collection.

In the meantime Shorty and his friends came to an understanding, and he was playing "Old Folks at Home," when she came back with the hat full of money.

This was going rather farther than Shorty had intended, but there was no backing out now, and so, thanking her warmly for what she had done, he put the money in his pocket.

She felt quite proud of her achievement on behalf of the "telescoped man," and once more taking a seat, prepared to listen to any further melody he might offer.

And he offered quite a programme, for he struck up that comic song, that the reader has undoubtedly often heard, called "The Barnyard Song," giving imitations of the different domestic fowls, pigs, sheep, etc., and what startled the passengers, and the old woman especially, was the other members of the minstrel company joined in the chorus, rendering it with fine artistic effect; even the conductor and brakeman came in to listen.

This was applauded so loudly that Shorty played other tunes which the troupe sang in their business, and they joined in like the well-trained band of musicians that they were.

The old woman became very thoughtful.

The fact of these people singing so well together set her to thinking.

Had she not been made the victim of a practical joke? She looked at Shorty as he sat perched up there playing, and there was nothing about him to show that he had ever been "telescoped," or that anything else had happened to him, other than a lack of growth.

She remained silent, thoughtful, and watchful, after the performance was over, and she saw looks of recognition pass between Shorty and his friends, and even heard them laughing over the affair.

Then she began to get mad and to clench her fists.

It might have been a joke to others, but it did not resemble one in the least to her.

She sat still for half an hour, and at length, as the train began to slow up, the brakeman put his head in at the door, and shouted:

"Milbury!"

"This is yer place, ma'am," said Shorty, who had been waiting for a chance to speak.

"Yes, and this is my place to warm you," said she, getting up and seizing him by the ear.

"Oh—oh!" yelled Shorty.

"Fool me, will you?" said she, twisting his ear with one hand and boxing his mug with her other. "Fool an old lady like me with your lying stories, will you?"

"Oh—oh! Give us a rest!"

"I'll give you a rest such as you deserve," said she, giving it to him again. "I'll telescope you, you rascal. Take that!" and she gave him a parting whack, just as the train stopped, greatly to the amusement of the passengers, and a few members of the troupe. "If I had time I'd give every one of you the same dose, for allowing that monkey of yours to fool me that way," she added, as she walked from the car.

"Good-by!" shouted somebody, and a loud laugh followed her as she went.

But the tables had been pretty badly turned on poor Shorty, and so he got down into his seat, out of sight as much as possible, and rubbed his ears until they stopped aching, before he resumed his laughing over the affair.

In fact, they reached Boston before he fairly recovered his spirits again, and was badly chaffed by the members of the company all the way.

Once in Boston, however, he felt quite at home, for the reader will remember that he was there once before with Bob Hart, and that he had managed to have a deal of fun at the expense of cer-

tain learned professors, who came to examine him as a great physical curiosity. Other members of the company were well acquainted there, also, and so they looked forward to a fortnight's pleasure.

The troupe was well received, as were Shorty, Eph Horn, and other specialty artists, and a good house greeted them.

But Shorty was the attraction after all, for so many stories had got abroad regarding his pranks, that everybody wanted to see him.

And the story of his last racket with the old woman in the cars, and how the tables were turned upon him, not only got abroad, but got into the papers, the Boston Herald publishing a full account of it, written up in good style.

The first few days were given up either to business or going about the city, when there was nothing else to do, and so Shorty found no chance to play any more of his jokes.

He, in company with Charley Pettingill, and some other members of the band visited Bunker Hill Monument, the Navy Yard, State House, the Common, Chelsea Beach, Squantum, and nearly every other place of interest or note in and around Boston.

But one day, while nearly every member of the company, as well as several other showmen of various kinds, were gathered about the front of a well-known saloon near the Howard Athenaeum, an idea for a practical joke struck Shorty, and he at once proceeded to execute it.

On that beat there was a police officer by the name of Beaty, a very consequential personage, who acted as though he felt that the fate of the whole city depended upon his watchful eye, and not only that, it was well known that he was very ambitious to be promoted, having his eye on no less a place than the City Marshal's office.

He was a tall, powerful man, but his mug, and especially his big, round, red nose, gave him away badly, and occasioned many a laugh at his expense, although it was well known that he was a very temperate man, and that nature colored his nose without the aid of liquor, probably for folks to laugh at.

Shorty had seen him pass several times in his consequential way, and resolved to play a joke on him.

So he gave an outline of it to the boys, and then proceeded to get a box, about a foot square, and two feet long, which he carefully filled with bricks and other rubbish that filled up all the chinks.

Then he went out on the sidewalk and took a look around to see how the land lay.

Finding everything as he could wish it, he returned to the saloon and got one of the porters to carry the box out and place it in the middle of the street.

Of course several persons gathered around in a very short time, and Shorty took up his position close by the box, looking very serious and earnest, and of course those in the racket stood either out of sight or gathered about with looks of earnestness in their faces.

Well, in a few minutes Beaty came along, and seeing a number of people gathered, he at once drew his club, and ran to see what the trouble was.

Seeing the box, he approached it.

"What is the trouble here?"

"A market-wagon dropped a box, and I couldn't yell loud enough ter make him hear, so I wouldn't let anybody touch it until you came, so that you could take it to the station-house," said Shorty, looking up innocently into the officer's face.

That was right, my lad. Always be honest, for honesty brings its reward. Now," said he, turning to the bystanders, "a great many boys would have taken that box home or into some saloon and rifled it of its contents. You are an honest lad, and when the owner calls for it you shall be remembered," said he, again addressing Shorty, but at the same time thinking that he would take all the honor of the affair to himself.

"Oh, that's all right, Mr. Officer. My Sabbath-school teacher always told me to be honest an' tell the truth," said Shorty, meekly.

"That was right," said Beaty, stopping down and lifting the box to his shoulder with a great effort.

"It may be something valuable," suggested one of the crowd.

"Well, it is heavy enough to be worth something," said Beaty, adjusting it to his shoulder, and starting down the street towards the City Hall.

The crowd went back into the saloon to laugh, or all but three or four of them, who followed the officer to see the fun out.

"Shorty, you are a brick!" said several.

"Then I guess he'll think he has got about fifty Shortys when he opens that box," said he.

"That's so," and every body laughed and took a drink on the strength of the sell.

"Now, fellers, we want ter get right out of this afore that cop gets back again, for he won't feel like singing psalm tunes much when he drops to ther racket," said Shorty.

"You bet he won't."

"If we only had a place where we could see and not be seen," suggested one of the party.

"Well, go right upstairs to the second floor, and you can look out of the windows," said the proprietor of the saloon.

"Good enough!" and a rush was made by Shorty and several others for the room, while others stationed themselves around in front of the saloon as though nothing had happened.

It was a very warm day, and Beaty sweat like a

bull as he toted that heavy box along towards the police-station, a quarter of a mile distant, yet he was amply repaid in the belief that the affair would put an extra feather in his cap, and set him agoing on the road to promotion.

"What if it should contain something very valuable?" he mused, wiping the perspiration from his face, "then I should get my name into the papers, probably receive a large reward from the owner, to say nothing of promotion."

Almost exhausted, he finally reached the police-station and placed the box upon the floor.

"What have you there?" asked the lieutenant.

"A box dropped in the street by a team," said he, mopping his red face.

"Any address on it?"

"Not a letter."

"That's strange. Take a chisel and open it."

Beaty proceeded to do so, while several officers and citizens gathered around.

It was a proud moment for him, and he felt his importance greatly.

But when the cover was pried off he did not feel so good.

On the top of the bricks there was a piece of paper with the word "Sold" on it, and a shout of laughter was the most natural thing in the world. It was a hearty shout.

But Officer Beaty didn't laugh.

Not much.

He felt more like clubbing somebody just then.

If the others saw any fun in lugging a box of brick weighing nearly a hundred pounds for nearly half a mile, he did not.

"Somebody has played a joke on you, officer," said the lieutenant.

Beaty made no reply, but grasping his club firmly he rushed out of the house.

Where now were the hopes he had indulged in with so much pleasure? Where his hopes of reward?

There was one way to get even, and that was to find the "honest lad" who had delivered it to him, for he was undoubtedly the little rascal who knew all about it.

By the time he had reached the saloon on Howard street he was worked up to a perfect rage.

"Have you seen a little, big-headed, knock-kneed son of a gun around here?" said he, going up to some of the gang who stood outside.

They assured him that they had seen no person of that description, and withal looked so honest that he could not suspect them.

"Was you here when I carried away that box a while ago?"

"I was," said one of them.

"Well, where is the mangy little runt who gave it to me?"

"I saw nobody give it to you."

"Well, I'll give it to you if I catch you with a laugh on your mug," said he, grasping his club.

"I don't see anything to laugh at."

"And you had better not. But if I find that little devil I'll give him something to cry about, you bet, and I am going to stay right here until I do find him."

Shorty and the others were looking down from the window overhead and hearing it all.

CHAPTER XXI.

It was not a very pleasant position, surely, that Shorty was in, with an angry policeman standing watch before the door of the saloon where he was hiding, after playing the joke upon him.

Officer Beaty was actually hungry for some one to club. He was bound to get square for carrying that box of bricks to the station house, and Shorty began to feel uncomfortable. Some way must be contrived to get out of the house he was watching, and so they began to look around, his companions being as much interested in getting away as he was, although not guilty.

After consulting awhile they made their way up to the roof of the house, and Shorty was boosted out of the scuttle, while the others sauntered down stairs again into the saloon where they could see the fun, should any turn up.

As for Shorty, his course was not so clear. He was on the roof, it was true, but how was he to get down, and where?

The roofs were flat, and a dozen or so of them were the same in height as the one he was on, and he began to look around for a chance to escape.

The prospect was not very inviting, and he began to think that he had got the worst of the joke after all.

He crept to the edge of the roof and gazed down at the wrathful policeman, who was still pacing back and forth in front of the saloon, with vengeance in his eye and a club in his hand.

"Oh, you big galoot!" said he, shaking his fist down at him; but he was careful not to speak loud enough to be heard.

"Oh, where is that little bandy-legged runt that played it on me? Where is he?" muttered the policeman, grasping his club more firmly. "Won't somebody bring him out? Will somebody give me a chance to practice on his body for five minutes? I'd even pay well for the privilege. Oh—oh," and, giving way to his feelings, he went through the pantomime of knocking the stuffing all out of poor Shorty. But while doing so he accidentally hit an old Irish woman upon her funny bone, and then there was trouble right away.

"Bad manners ter ye, ye dirty spalpeen; what are ye huttin' me for?" she demanded.

"Who hit you?"

"You did, bad manners ter ye."

"Careful, old woman; don't you sass the law," said he, shaking his club at her.

"Ter the divil wid ye an' ye law. What right have ye ter hut a dacint, p'cible woman as is a walkin' along about her business?"

"If I hit you, it was accidental."

"Out! Didn't I sa ye do it a purpose?"

"No, you did not. Move on."

"I'll not," said she, planting her big feet stubbornly and firmly upon the sidewalk.

"Then I'll take you in."

"An' ye won't, then! I dare ye ter lay the weight of yer finger on me. If oo do I'll make oo smart for it, so I will; I'll report ye an' have ye broke wid the city marshal, so I will, an' then I'll give ye

Shorty scraped up a handful of pebbles or gravel, with which the roof was covered, and showered them down upon him, dodging back out of sight as he did so.

That policeman was in no humor to be trifled with, and suspecting that one of the fellows standing behind him had done it, he whirled around and grabbed him.

"Come along," said he.

"What for?" demanded the astonished loafer.

"I'll show you what for; come along."

"I haven't done anything."

"Oh, I know all about it; come along."

"You are mistaken, officer," said Charley Pettingill, one of the minstrel company.

Just then Shorty threw down another handful of the gravel, and the officer released his prisoner and started for the middle of the street, while Shorty ran for dear life over the roofs of the buildings.

Beaty heard the call and started to see what it meant, but, espying Shorty, he forgot everything else and pounced upon him like a turkey on a potato bug. Another officer came running up, and went to see about the yelling woman, thus allowing Beaty to have it out with Shorty.

"Now, then, I have got you," said he, grasping his club firmly.

"What yer got me for?" asked Shorty.

"I'll show you, you young scoundrel," and he was about to bang the top of his head off with his club.

"Look out, ole man, don't strike me."

"Why not?"

"Because I carry a pop."

"You do, eh? Come along," and seizing him by the coat collar, he started with him for the station-house.

"What 'er goin' ter do wid me?"



"Fool me, will you?" said she, twisting his ear with one hand and boxing his mug with the other. "Fool an old lady like me with your lying stories!"

suit for committin' a bigamy on me in the strate!" and gettin' warmed up, she shook her fist in his face, and drew a crowd in a few moments.

"Go along, now," said he, a trifle more pleasant, seeing that he was likely to put his foot in it again.

"I'll not! I'm a 'dacint, respectable woman, I'd have ye know, an' I'll not be put upon in the strate by a spawnee like ye, if ye do wear a uniform; so now, pu' that in yer poipe an' smoke it."

The crowd laughed, and this gave her courage and made him mad.

"Clear out, or I'll arrest the whole lot of you," he yelled and a few timid ones left.

"Ye'll not arrest onybody, ye big, cowardly black-guard; ye're only fit ter bate dacint women an' children. Out wid ye!"

"Move on, I tell you."

"Not vanst; divil a wanst!" she screamed, spanking her fists together.

Officer Beaty glanced around and took in the situation. He knew he was in the wrong, but his official dignity would not let him admit it. He felt like arresting her, but if he did so the "bandy-legged rut" he was looking for might escape. So he concluded to "take water" and "move on," himself.

He turned and walked away, but the irate old woman tongue-lashed him until he was out of hearing. It was another bitter pill to swallow, but he had to take it or give up the hope of capturing Shorty, who was still looking over the edge of the roof, and enjoying the fun as much as any of them.

But the moment the old woman left, Beaty returned, and again took his stand sullenly in front of the saloon, disdaining to reply to some civil questions which were put to him by those who stood around.

Without looking to see where he was going, and intent only in getting as far away as possible in the shortest time, he ran plump upon a glass skylight, and went through it head first, smashing sash and all, and falling upon a bed where an old maid lay taking her afternoon nap.

Was she frightened? Did she howl?

Well, you bet. And Shorty, besides being frightened almost out of his wits, had the breath nearly bounced out of his body by the tumble.

The old maid screamed and covered up her head with the bed clothes, and Shorty, seeing that this was his time to get if he was going to get at all, picked up his hat, and placing his hand affectionately upon his belly, he mosied out of that room as fast as he could go, turning the key in the door as he went.

Finding the stairs, he started down them for the purpose of finding the front door. But he could hear the old gal yelling all kinds of bloody murder, and the fear that she would alarm the other inmates of the house, made him particularly anxious to get on the outside of it.

Just as he reached the foot of the second flight of stairs, he heard doors open and shut above him, and knew that a rush was being made for the room where the screaming was being done.

He reached the front door, however, without being seen, but he had scarcely got upon the sidewalk before somebody threw up a window, and shouted for the police vigorously.

"Now, duck-legs," said he, starting to run, but instantly remembering that this was the very worst thing he could do under the circumstances, and that he might be arrested for a burglar or something of the kind, he stopped short and began to look up at the house.

"I'll show you, you rascal."

"I hain't done nothin'."

"Oh, no; you never do anything. I'll show you how funny it is to play tricks on police officers."

"I hain't played no tricks."

"Oh, no. You are an honest little cuss, arn't you?"

"Of course I be."

"Oh, yes. Didn't tell that that box of bricks fell off a wagon, did you?"

"Well, what of it?"

"Didn't put up the job, and get me to carry it clear to the station-house, did you?"

"No. How'd I know what was in der box?" asked Shorty, in a grieved voice.

"I'll show you."

"Yer'd better drop on yerself, I tell you."

"I've dropped on you, and I mean to hold on until I get you under lock and key," replied Beaty.

"I'll make it hot for you."

"You will, eh? You've made it hot for me once to-day, and now I'll make it warm for you, see if I don't."

Shorty thought he was in for it sure enough that time. Quite a crowd, including several members of the troupe, followed along behind to see how the affair resulted, and when the officer dragged him into the station house, and up before the captain's desk, the crowd surged in, and nearly filled the room.

"Well, officer, what have you got now?" asked the captain, laughing, for the memory of the joke that was played on him was still fresh.

"I have got that little 'honest' runt."

"The what?"

"The little cuss that played that joke on me."

The captain and lieutenant got up, and looked over

the top of the desk at Shorty, and they both laughed as they did so.

"Well, what are you going to do with him?" said him to Deer Island."

"For what?"
"Why, for—fooling with an officer of the law." A loud laugh followed this, and Beaty looked around savagely, as though he would have taken delight in clubbing the whole crowd.

"But there is no law against playing a joke on a policeman. How do you know he did it, though?"

"I didn't do nuffen, cap; I only showed him der box, an' he said I was a good boy for it," said Shorty, and then there was another laugh, in which the officers joined.

"Oh, he put up the job, and I can prove it," said Beaty.

"What is your name?" demanded the captain, looking down at Shorty.

"My name's Shorty."

"Shorty? Where do you live?"

"In New York?"

"What are you doing here?"

"I b'long ter der California Minstrels."

"Oh, ho! So you are the famous 'Shorty,' are you? Well, I'm glad to know you," said the captain, and Beaty looked sad. "But I believe you enjoy the reputation of being a practical joker, do you not? Didn't I see something in the *Herald* about you once?"

"Maybe. Them chaps are always saying something 'bout a fellar," replied Shorty.

"Well, that's so, I guess," said the captain, sitting back and laughing heartily. But did you put up this job on the officer?"

"Well, I thought I'd give him a little racket," he replied, looking up at him shyly.

"Oh, you young rascal," said Beaty.

"You mustn't play jokes on policemen, Shorty."

"They're good at 'little jokes' themselves."

"Well, some of them are, I must admit. What do you propose to do about it, Beaty?"

"Punish him," said he, savagely.

"But I should advise you to say nothing about the affair, for it will be sure to get into the papers and you will have everybody laughing at you."

Beaty saw the point, but made no reply.

"I shall let you go, Shorty; but you must not play any more tricks on officers."

"All right, cap, much obliged, come an' see me," said he, starting for the door.

"I'll do so," and the crowd followed Shorty out into the street, congratulating him and having a good laugh over the affair.

But a keen-eyed and long-eared reporter got wind of the affair and wrote it up for the *Herald*, and the next day it was the talk of the town, and gave Shorty greater fame than ever, while everybody was laughing at the officer, and to this day he is undoubtedly sorry that he did not club the whole head off of his little tormentor.

And to make it even worse, Manager Polly fixed up an act out of the affair which made a tremendous hit, and was the means of drawing full houses for a week longer.

But, as the reader has found out by this time, Shorty didn't always escape scot free, and one night soon after his arrest, he happened to set his chair right on a trap in the stage when he went out to give his banjo solo, and discovering this fact several members of the company agreed to assist him in a "finish" that would astonish him and the audience quite as much as the one did at Providence where he suddenly vanished up in the scenery by the assistance of a rope and some vigorous pulling.

So they waited until just as he finished his solo, and then they sprung the trap suddenly, and with a frightened yell Shorty went out of sight through the stage like a flash.

The audience roared with delight, for that frightened look which he had on as he went out of sight was enough to make a mule laugh, and supposing it to be a part of the performance, they enjoyed it and called for him again.

But Shorty was picking himself up and being laughed at by members of the company, and he was too confounded mad to pay any attention to the calls from the audience.

"Oh, won't I get hunk wid you fellers for this!" he whined, as he came limping up stairs where they were laughing.

"Oh, that was only a 'finish' for you," said several of them.

"Well, all right for you roosters; I'll make a 'finish' for you; if I don't, yer may kill me!" he growled, going to his dressing-room.

The fact was, it was rather a rough bounce, and a dangerous one as well. Manager Polly gave them a good scolding for it, and warned them against attempting such a thing again.

The next morning Shorty was sore and lame on account of it, but he wasn't so bad off that he could not think, and he did the most of it for the benefit of the fellows who had given him such a bounce.

That night he went to the theater early, and found the stage all set by the carpenter, that is, the scenes were run on, and the chairs set in a row for the performers who were to do the first part.

Taking a ball of twine from his pocket, he proceeded to tie a piece to the lower back round of each chair, after which he gathered the ends all up and took them through the scenes directly back, and tied them all together, then arranged them in such a way as not to be seen.

The twine was so nearly the color of the stage,

that it would not be seen without taking pains to do so, and was, therefore, not discovered.

The theater began to fill up with people, and finally the time came for the curtain to go up, and the performers filed in behind the curtain, all ready to commence.

The way they did it was to stand in front of their chairs until the curtain went up, then bow all together to the audience, then take their seats.

This was the programme; but just as they were about to sit down, Shorty pulled the strings attached to the chairs, drawing them back, and the whole company, with the exception of the man who played the boss fiddle, went bang down upon the stage.

Shorty cut back to his dressing-room, and the audience just howled. They saw the chairs move back, and, of course, knew that somebody had played a joke upon them, and as Shorty was already known as a practical joker, they all concluded that it must be his doings, and this did not diminish the laugh any.

But a more bumped and disgusted-looking company of minstrels than they were was never seen. They didn't change color, for that was impossible, but, oh! how they did cuss to themselves, and conclude that Shorty had got more than even with them.

The tambourine player pulled out the strings from between the scenes so that the audience could see them, and then the company took their seats, although the sing was nearly all knocked out of them. But of course they made the best of it, and pretended that they were not chagrined.

The two "end men," however, managed to work considerable fun out of it after the overture.

"Mr. Johnsing, how do you feel dis ebening?" asked Bones.

"Feel hurt. How does you feel, Mr. Clown?"

"I don't feel quite so down as I did a few moments ago," and the audience roared again.

"Guess dar mus' be spirits troublin' our chairs dis ebenin', Mr. Johnsing."

"Shorty spirits, I guess," and at the mere mention of his name the audience laughed and applauded loudly.

Then the troupe proceeded with the first part and got through with it without any further mishap, after which they hurried off to get a whack at Shorty, but Manager Polly was there, and had given him a lecture beforehand.

"You little insignificant runt," said one.

"You concentrated essence of deviltry. I'll kick the nose right off of you," said another.

"Get out, you skunk! If I get a hold of you once, you'll give up the show business for one while, you bet," said a third, and so they all gathered around, ready and anxious to chaw poor Shorty up.

"Hold on there, boys," said Polly; "you began this thing by bouncing him down through the trap last night, and now he is even with you. But this business must stop, and the first time I hear any more of it, there'll be a bad actor looking for a situation."

This had the desired effect, although it didn't make them love Shorty any better, and they hurried off to change for their next parts.

Shorty grinned a grin as big as a street lamp, and as the curtain went up he walked out to give his banjo solo, and the audience fairly yelled with delight as they saw him.

As soon as quiet was restored he began to play, and on being called out he managed to rattle off the following words, being always very smart at getting up new and appropriate words to fit almost any occasion:

De boys dey bounced me down a trap,
Sing song, Polly, won't yer ki me oh;
But dey can't fool much wid dis chap,
Sing song, Polly, won't yer ki me oh.

CHORUS.

Sing ki mo, ke mo, waro dar, my hi, my mo, my rumstipumediddle, nutmeg, pinny-winky-winktom.
But I got even wid de chairs,
Sing song, Polly, won't yer ki me, oh,
Dey all sat down, an' all see stars,
Sing song, Polly, won't yer ki me, oh.

CHORUS.—Sing ki mo, &c.

The song made a great hit, a much greater hit with the audience, however, than it did with the company, each one of whom swore seventeen kinds of oaths that they would get even with him for his joke.

As for the policeman, Beaty, he had witnessed the performance several times, and he was also ready to club the meat all off of the little rascal the very first chance he could get. He liked him as a performer better than he did as a joker, although the people who patronized the show liked him in both.

Well, the time was up at last, and they were to leave for Albany, although they might have drawn good houses for a month longer. And there were any quantity of show towns around Boston, but Manager Polly was anxious to get out west, where he believed even a better business could be done than he was now doing. So they packed up their traps on Sunday, and were all ready to take the cars on Monday.

Shorty being always ready for a change, didn't care how quick they got away, but the other members of the company regarded Boston as a sort of a home, and almost dreaded to leave it and their many warm friends behind.

The next morning they took a coach from the hotel, and Shorty got up on the seat with the

driver. Just before starting who should walk along but that policeman, and Shorty spotted him.

"Hallo, ole man!" he called.

The officer stopped and looked around.

"How you was?"

"You want to button up your lip, young fellow," said he, grasping his club.

"Toted any boxes of bricks, lately?"

"I'd just like to curren you down with this club, before you go."

"Haven't time now, ole man. Wait 'til I get back, an' I'll give yer another racket."

"And I'll make a bad nigger minstrel's funeral if you do, you may bet on that."

"Oh, you needn't kill anybody on my account, boss. Ta-ta! By-by. Be good to yerself. Lay in all ther stray boxes yer find, an' be good to all ther honest little boys yer come across," said he, as the driver started the coach.

"I'll pound your head, you ill-looking scamp!" yelled Beaty, shaking his club at him.

"Day-day! tral-la-la, George!" he called, as the coach rattled away, and Shorty left Boston in the midst of a laugh, as he had entered it.

CHAPTER XXII.

WE left Shorty just as he and the California Minstrels were leaving Boston for Albany. Nothing of any account happened until the cars arrived at Worcester, when Shorty discovered the old hackman, Dodge, with whom he had such a lively racket on the occasion of their visit there, which the reader of course remembers.

The old man was at the depot as usual in search of riders, and Shorty could not resist the temptation to have a little fun with him again. The train stopped there fifteen minutes for the passengers to get refreshments, and there was the usual crowd and bustle, and the usual comical scene of a hundred hungry people trying to choke themselves and scald their gullets, under the mistaken impression that they had only half time enough to eat and behave decently.

Dodge was standing near the main door and quietly hinting to everyone that passed that he would take them anywhere they wanted to go for one dollar.

"Hello, pop. How you was?" said Shorty, going up to him, and extending his hand.

"Hello. Is this you, ruinty?" replied the old hackman, blossoming into a grin.

"Of course it's me; glad ter see me?"

"Well, yes," said the old fellow, slowly, but he didn't seem to be greatly overjoyed.

"Thought you'd be."

"Glad enough, if you don't undertake to play any of your infernal pranks on me again," he added.

Shorty grinned like a jack-lantern.

"But if you do I'll shake you right out of your socks," said he, severely.

"Oh, honest Injun!" said Shorty, holding up his hand in token of sincerity.

"Why, confound you. I have my life bothered out of me yet about that joke you played on me."

"So? Well a chap likes a racket once in a while, yer know."

The hack driver shook his head slowly, as if to indicate unmistakably that he wanted none of it in his.

"How's biz?"

"Pretty poor. Where are you going?"

"Ter Albany. Been ter Providence an' Boston since I seen you."

"Good business?"

"Red hot."

"Glad somebody's doin' well," he growled.

Just then a couple of young fellows came along and asked him what he would take to drive them to the south end of the city, and being told they concluded to accept the offer, and at once got into the carriage.

The old man was delighted and was on the point of leaping upon his box when Shorty spoke to him.

"I say, pop—look here a minute?"

"What is it?"

"Come here," said he, beckoning to him in a significant way.

"What's up?" he asked, coming to where Shorty had retreated.

"I know I played a little thing on yer once, an' now I'd like ter give yer hunk?"

"In what way?"

"Don't give me away, will you?" said he, in a mysterious manner.

"No—no. What is it?"

"Them chaps in yer carriage."

"What of 'em?"

"Get yer pay afore yer cart 'em."

"Why so?"

"They sat right ahead of me in the car, coming from Boston."

"Well?"

"I overheard 'em."

"What about?"

"They're dead broke—busted—a pair o' beats. They were talkin' 'bout yer, an' said as how they would 'hang you up' for a ride when they got here."

"O-ho! they did, hey? Well, we'll see about that. Much obliged to you for telling me."

"Oh, I'm no slouch, if I do have fits."

"All right," and turning away, he opened the

door of his carriage, while Shorty got away out of sight.

"Come, driver, when do you start?" asked one of the fellows.

"I start with you after I collect two dollars," said he, sharply.

"What's the matter, old man?" asked the other.

"Oh, nothing, only I don't allow strangers to hang me up for rides."

"What the devil do you mean, anyhow? Do you think you won't get your pay?"

"No, I think I shall get it, or you won't get a ride."

"Confound your impudence, you old scoundrel! why, we can buy and peddle such men as you are. We are the nephews of the Honorable Stephen Saulsbury, and you may go the devil," and stepping from the carriage, they ordered another one and drove away.

Dodge was confounded. He stood looking after the retreating carriage, as a person looks after an escaped bird. Shorty skipped back and got into the cars without being seen.

"Darn my buttons, I—where the devil is that little runt?" and he ran around trying to find him, for he was fully convinced that he was again the victim of another of Shorty's sells. "Where has the little rascal gone, I wonder? I want to murder him."

Just then the conductor cried "All aboard," and the train began to move slowly out of the depot. Shorty threw up the window of the car and stuck his head out.

"Hello, pop! Did you bounce 'em?" he called, as he moved slowly past him.

"You devilish little runt, I'll bounce you if I ever get hold of you," yelled Dodge, shaking his clenched fist at him.

"Good-bye. Be good ter yourself, ole man."

"I'll be good to you; jump off and let me grease my wheels with you!"

"Day-day!" was Shorty's last call as he withdrew his head from the window.

"Oh, let me at him!" howled Dodge, actually running along after the train and shaking his fist, so madly excited was he.

So blind was he to everything else that he ran into a colored woman, knocking her over and spilling the contents of her market-basket, and finishing by tumbling on top of her himself.

Then there was a row, and such a wild tongue-lashing as she gave him fairly made his hair stand. "Great, big, overgrown, slabsided, blundering, fly-blown, maggot-eaten, turkey-trodden, hump-backed, bow-legged, goggle-eyed, measly-meated, blubber-mouthed, whiskey-breathed, pumpkin-headed, good-for-nothing, squash-bellied, turnip-nosed, big-footed, toggle-joluted, long-armed son of a sea cook, can't you see where you're going?" she yelled, and then finding that she had not wholly blasted him or satisfied her anger, she called for a policeman.

Of course it was an accident and he had no trouble in satisfying the officer, but he could not smooth down the feathers of the irate old black hen that he had so grievously ruffled.

"All right, you stand in with him," said she, to the policeman, who ordered her to move on. "But wait—only wait. If I ever catch him down in Pine Meadows I'll fix him," said she, picking up her things and getting out.

"And all this on account of that confounded rascal Shorty," said Dodge, returning to his hack.

"Oh, if I ever do lay hands on him, oh—oh!"

But Shorty was a mile away by this time, and out of all present danger so far as that particular victim was concerned.

He told the joke to other members of the troupe, and seemed to regard it as something decidedly rich.

"You will get hammered all to pieces some day for your deviltry," said Manager Polly.

"I hope so," said several, who overheard the remark.

"But what's a cove goin' ter do?"

"Behave himself," replied Polly.

"But what's a cove goin' ter do when he can't behave himself?"

"Then he ought to be killed."

Shorty ornamented his mug with one of those peculiar grins of his, and drew down into his seat almost out of sight, probably to think up and concoct some other mischief.

But the monotony of motion and sound gradually got the best of him, and he fell asleep with his hat over his eyes, and when once asleep it took considerable to rouse him.

Now it is well known that nearly every one of the troupe were down on Shorty, and although they had been forbidden to play any more practical jokes, they found it very hard to resist doing so, especially since he had the best of them all so bad by the last trick played upon them at the Howard Athenaeum in Boston.

Finally Polly went forward into the smoking-car, and several of them put their heads together to play some joke on Shorty, who was now the sole occupant of the seat and still asleep.

One of them had a porous plaster in his pocket, which he had bought for the benefit of a lame back, that resulted from the tumble Shorty had given him with the others at Boston.

"Now if you fellows won't give me away I will fix him," said Charley Pettingill.

"All right, go ahead."

The car was pretty well filled, but the majority of the passengers were either asleep or engaged in

reading, so they failed to notice what was being done.

Charley went along and took a seat behind Shorty. Then removing his hat he took the plaster and placed it, sticky side down, on his head, after which he replaced the hat and went back to where the other fellows were.

Shorty's hair was cut close to his head, and the plaster reaching over his head and down far enough to take in both of his ears, soon got warm and stuck like a flea to a dog's back.

But still he slept on, all unconscious of what had been done, and the jokers began to get tired of waiting to see the result.

Finally the cars stopped at Springfield, and a large number got out for refreshments, yet Shorty continued to nap. That was refreshment enough for him.

Several additional passengers got into the car when the train was ready to start again, and as luck would have it, a fat old fellow took a seat beside Shorty, who still slept, and in less than fifteen minutes he was asleep himself.

Finally the majority of the passengers dozed off, for but few people can resist the lulling influence of a smoothly-riding car and remain awake.

But after the old man had been asleep a short time, Shorty woke up. Of course the first thing that attracted his attention was the plaster, and as it was by this time sticking closer than a brother, his idea was that somebody was pulling his hair and ears.

"Stop it!" he yelled, "stop it!"

This of course woke up several persons, and all eyes were turned to Shorty.

"Stop it; leave me be!" he bawled again.

"What's the matter, sonny?" asked the old fellow who sat beside him.

"Leave me be, or I'll let yer know!"

"Who's touching you?"

"You be. Oh—oh!"

"You idiot; are you drunk?"

Shorty by this time had got fully awakened, and pulled off his hat. When the plaster was seen, some laughed and others looked amazed, and couldn't for the life of them make out what the deuce it was, any way.

"What in thunder is that?" asked the man.

Shorty rubbed his hand over it with a look on his face that would have made the fortune of a comic artist.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Well, that's what I should like to know. It looks like a porous plaster."

"Porous thunder!"

"But how came it on your head?"

"I give it up," said he, and glancing over to where some of the fellows sat, he saw them convulsed with laughter.

"That settles it," said he, for he dropped to it right away.

"What settles it?" asked the man.

"Some of dem hamfatters over there put it on me while I was asleep."

The man looked around, and seeing nearly everybody else laughing, began to laugh himself.

"Never mind, I'll get even wid 'em, yer can gamble yer bottom dollar," and then he began to pull the plaster from one of his ears.

But this was no easy job, for it stuck to him like wax, and the comical expression of his face as he tugged at it set the passengers in a roar the whole length of the car, and several of them left their seats and gathered around, for by this time they all understood the racket.

The man in the seat with him volunteered to assist, but even after his ears were released the plaster stuck to his hair, so that it nearly pulled it out.

"Better put your head in soak," suggested one of the passengers.

"Better let it remain; they are good for weak hands," said another.

"Chop your head off, and then you can rip the plaster off, and it won't hurt," added a third.

Poor Shorty, he had nothing to say to all this fun that was being poked at him, for his hands and mind were fully occupied in getting out of the scrape he was in.

As for the other members of the troupe, they were looking as honest as they could under the circumstances, although it was dreadful hard work to keep straight faces.

But finally Shorty got clear of the plaster, and the laughter gradually subsided; yet while working at it he could but think of the jokes he had played on others, and feel that it only served him right, and still he couldn't make up his mind to allow the thing to pass in payment for what he had done to the others.

He quietly laid the plaster on the floor near him, resolved to await events, and the old fellow who sat beside him, after laughing and shaking his belly over the matter for some time, finally went to sleep again.

On—the train was thundering towards Albany, but there was no more sleep for poor Shorty. The laugh had been turned on him too sharply, and he felt too sore to sleep.

Once or twice he glanced up at the fat man who sat beside him, and thought what fun it would be to put that plaster over his face while he slept, but then he would conclude he had a better use for it, and so he did not do it.

At the next stopping place he got out with the others to get something to eat, and the boys chaffed him unmercifully about the plaster.

"What's the matter with your mug, Shorty?" asked one.

"He was only trying to hold his ears up," said another.

"Funny place for a porous plaster. Have a headache, Shorty?" put in a third.

"What was your racket, runt?"

"Oh, well, now, all right for you fellows. But I'd get hunk, see if I don't," said Shorty. "Want another tumble?"

"You'd better take a tumble, and play no more jokes on us, or you'll get hurt."

"No, he'll get raised."

"We'll make a three-foot funeral of you."

"All right, you can't play no sticking-plaster dodge on me, yer jest bet."

"Who played it on you?"

"All right, I know."

"It was the old cove who sat beside you."

"Oh, yes; I know where that plaster come from, and don't yer make any mistake," said he, going back into the car again, leaving the others to laugh and talk over the affair.

This time he took a seat behind the one he had sat in before, and where the old man still sat, and nearer to the "gang," several of whom went to sleep as soon as the cars started again.

Charley Pettingill was of this number, and as Shorty suspected him of playing the joke, he kept his eye on him. Finally, seeing that he was asleep, he took the plaster and spread it all over his face.

It awoke him, of course, but Shorty got out of the way, and had the satisfaction of hearing several of those who had laughed at him, now laughing at Pettingill.

But Charley peeled it off and said nothing, although it nearly pulled his mustache out by the roots in doing so. He kept the plaster, however, thinking there was fun yet to be had out of it, in fact, that there was fun as long as there was any stick to the thing.

Shorty had taken refuge in the car ahead, where the manager was, and Charley knew very well that he would stay there, so he began to study what he should do with the plaster.

At length his eyes rested on the old fellow who had occupied the seat with Shorty. His hat was off and he was still asleep, while his bald head glistened like a billiard ball. Happy thought.

Spreading the plaster out carefully, he crept along and laid it carefully upon his head, and then skipped back to his seat. The man partially roused, but without understanding what had happened, he again fell asleep.

Nobody had observed the transaction, and so the fellows ranged themselves as if also asleep, but in such a way as to see what was going on. The conductor passed through the train soon after, and seeing the plaster on the old fellow's head, laughed and looked around for the meaning.

But the conspirators were apparently all of them asleep, and so he passed along without molesting him or making further inquiries.

It was not long, however, before the old fellow did wake up, and as the plaster had by this time got warm and sticking close, he at once visited his head to see what the trouble was.

He found out instantly and as quickly suspected who had placed it there. He looked anxiously around to see if Shorty was in sight, but of course did not see him.

"Where in thunder and blazes is that ugly little runt gone?" he asked. "Show him to me. Oh, the little devil!" and while pulling to get it off he was at the same time giving himself away badly to his fellow passengers, by calling their attention to him.

But, oh—oh! how mad he was. He stood up and sat down by turns, and then he danced up and down the aisle of the car, while frantically endeavoring to pull the plaster off.

"I'll give any man, woman or child fifty million of dollars to show me that little cuss," he exclaimed.

"He went into the car ahead of us," said a man whose attention had been drawn to the riotous proceeding on the part of the badly plastered passenger, who was howling with pain and anger.

"Oh, let me find him!" said he, finally ripping it off, and flinging it away. "Only let me dandle him awhile on my knee and fondle him a few," and picking up his hat which had fallen on the floor, and into which he had put his big foot, he started for the forward car with blood in his eyes.

Shorty was gazing from the car window out upon the flying scene, and the indignant old man lit on him like a hawk on a sparrow. Catching him up by the collar of his coat, he started back again into the car where he had been sitting, evidently intending to warn him in the presence of those who had seen the affair.

Shorty yelled like blazes and kicked like a freshly-nabbed lobster, while several of the passengers followed to see what the trouble was all about, although Manager Polly happened to be in the sleeping-car at the time.

"Lemme be!" yelled Shorty, kicking the shins of his captor, and trying to get away.

"I'll let you be, you little devil. I'll learn you to play tricks on passengers," and turning him over his knee, he gave him an awful spanking, and made him yell louder than ever.

"Oh—oh! stop it—stop it!"

"How do you like that?"

"Not any, lemme be!" bawled Shorty, while the passengers were in convulsions.

"Put plasters on my head again, will you?" he asked, standing him on his head.

"I didn't."

"Don't you lie or I'll throw you out of the window," and then he turned him right side up, and stood him on his feet again.

"What's der matter wid you, anyway?" he demanded, indignantly.

"Do you know what's the matter with you?" asked the old man.

"I guess I do. What are you thumpin' blue thunder out me for? Trying ter play me for drum? Go shoot yourself."

"Give me none of your lip or I'll dust you some more. Now clear out, and if I catch you fooling around me again, I'll take you by the two shins and pull you in two," said he, returning to his seat.

"I didn't do nuffin'."

"Yes you did; you put that plaster on my head while I was asleep."

"No I didn't."

It will be remembered that Shorty was in the same seat when the old fellow went to sleep, and everything looked just as though he was the guilty joker.

"Clear out now or I'll give you more."

"Nice lot of duffers you are, ter lay off and see him pound me," said he, turning to several of the minstrels who were laughing.

"Served you right," said the sweet singer.

"Oh, I understand. Some of you ham fatters played it on his nibs while he was asleep, an' then layed it ter me. But all right. Yer jest wait an' see if I don't get good an' hunk," saying which he waddled out of the car.

But he felt better to stand than to sit, for there was a tingling and a sore sensation directly under the seat of his pants that made him feel sick. Poor Shorty. He was having the worst of it, and it was coming a trifle too frequent to be very entertaining.

But they soon arrived in Albany and put up at Stanwix Hall, tired and dirty with their long ride. Here they were billed to play for one week at Martin's Opera House, and as the weather was fine there was a good prospect of doing a fine business.

Everybody was in good humor but Shorty. He was sore both in body and spirit, but he had already made up his mind how he would pay them off, and to do it before he slept if possible.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It will be remembered that Shorty had been bounced around pretty lively by the members of the California Minstrels, with whom he was acting, while on the passage from Boston to Albany.

But it will also be remembered that he wasn't the sort of a chap to allow such things to go without getting square in some way; and so he set himself to work as soon as they got to Albany.

It may be remarked, by the way, that Albany is one of the handsomest cities in this country. It is one hundred and fifty miles from New York, on the Hudson river, at the head of steamboat navigation, and is delightfully situated on high ground that slopes back from the river; and besides the superb public buildings (it being the capital of New York State), it contains many beautiful private residences.

Shorty had often heard the place mentioned, and always wanted to see it. In fact, he came very near doing so once, having stowed himself away among some freight on board of a steamboat that ran between New York and Albany.

But, luckily, or unluckily, he was discovered and bounced—thrown overboard, in fact, and told to "swim out." And he did, and it dampened his ambition so much regarding his proposed visit to Albany that he concluded to give it up and stick to New York.

Remembering all this, he waddled out and sauntered up Broadway (funny, isn't it, that almost every city in the United States has a "Broadway?"), and the sights that met his gaze so interested and occupied his attention that he failed to notice the sensation he was creating on the street.

A crowd of youngsters was following him and speculating amongst themselves as to who he was. But, at length, one of them discovered that he was the same "Shorty" whose picture adorned the dead walls and fences, it being printed at full length upon one of the fancy posters.

This, of course, created a sensation among the boys, for although they had never seen or heard of him before, the mere fact of his being a negro minstrel and having his portrait upon the posters was quite enough to make him a very important person in their estimation; and so they followed along after him, discussing his stunted and comical appearance, and assuring each other that they should go to the show at the opera-house and "take it all in."

"Hi, Jimmy!" he heard one of them call, "stag his nibs."

"Who is it?" bawled the one addressed.

"Shorty, der chap wid de California Minstrels."

This made him look around, and then, for the first time, he saw the crowd.

"Ah, what'r givin' me? moonlight on a shutter?" asked the other, walking up to Shorty and gazing impudently into his face.

"Yes, 'tis; don't yer see he's just like der picters all around? 'Course it's Shorty."

As this became slightly annoying to our hero, he

walked out into the street and hailed a car. But the boys were not disposed to allow him to depart without some evidence of their good feeling towards him, and so one of them called for three cheers for "Shorty," and they were given with a wild hurrah, that called the attention of everybody within a block.

The conductor of the car assisted him to get on, and waddling in he gave a little jump and landed by the side of a colored woman, who gave a slight scream, and rolled her eyes at him in wonder. This was his usual way of getting upon a high seat, but it rather got the best of her, and she seemed at a loss to make up her mind about Shorty, whether he was a boy, a boy and a half, or a small edition of a man.

His little legs were sticking straight out, and he rolled his eye up at her in such a comical way, that everybody else in the car laughed. But she did not; she was rather inclined to be offended.

"Who you look at, hey?" she blurted out.

"Lookin' at der handsomest woman in der car," replied Shorty, the joke being that she happened to be the only female in the car.

This raised a laugh at her expense, and again did he cock his eye up at her.

"Better mind you own business, or I get de conductor ter fro yer off de car."

"I ain't doin' nuffin, aunty."

"Better look ter home, good fo' nuffin' little runt," said she, turning away.

"I would if I war as handsome as yer are," said he, with a provoking grin.

"Better stop yer insults, I tole you so."

The passengers were greatly amused, but at the next corner she got out and spoiled the fun. But she had a last fling at Shorty.

"Better go soak you great big head—goin' round insultin' folks."

"Day-day, aunty," he called after her, and she turned around to shake her fist at him.

But that bit of fun soon spent itself, and he got off himself at the next corner, still bent on seeing the features of interest in the city.

Up on State House Hill he found much to interest him. He was a great hand to go nosing around, and he made it a point to know all about every place that he visited.

He asked a man what building the State House was, and looking down at the comical little runt, he concluded to have a little fun with him.

"That? Oh, that's the opera-house," said he.

"Yer don't say so. Bully old buildin'."

"Very fine."

"Shows go there?"

"Oh, yes."

"Californee minstrels play there?"

"Oh, yes," said the man, carelessly.

Shorty took a good look at the magnificent building, concluding that it was several notches ahead of the Academy of Music in New York, and as he turned to ask some other question he detected a smile on his face. He dropped to it right away.

"Say, what are you givin' me—taffy on a broom corn?" he demanded, pulling his hat down savagely over his eyes.

"What d'r say?"

"What are yer givin' me?"

"I tole you that was the opera-house."

"I don't see it. I won't have a cent's worth of it," said he.

"Well, they have music there."

"What kind er music?"

"Chin music, when the legislature is in session."

"Oh, that's the State House?"

The man nodded.

"The law manufactory?"

Another nod.

"Where der politicians get up an' howl?"

"You are right, sonny," said the man, turning and walking slowly away.

"Wal, he's ther worst ole guide-post ever I saw," muttered Shorty, continuing his walk. "Was gettin' me on a sweet ole shoe-string, wasn't he? But I dropped on him."

Then a tall, lanky man came along and offered him a tract.

"What's this?" he asked, taking it.

"A tract, my young friend and fellow traveler to the bar of God," drawled the man.

"Oh, it is, eh? Well, I pass," said he, handing it back to him.

"You what?"

"I pass. Bad hand."

"What do you mean, my young friend?"

"Wal, I'm no fellow traveler with you; I'm in der show business, I am."

"Is it possible that one so young can be so far gone on the road to perdition?" exclaimed the man, holding up both hands.

"We arn't on the road ter Perdition; we don't show in any such town. We show in such places as Providence, Boston, Albany, Troy, Buffalo, an' we skip yer one-hoss towns."

"Oh, my young friend, you do not understand me."

"Wal, that's all right. I was a gospel sharp myself once."

"A what?"

"Why, one of those snoozers as plays good; goes ter Sunday-school, and plays piety on folks."

"I'm astonished at your lost condition."

"Oh, I'm all right. But it didn't pay an' so I got out of it. Do yer make it pay?"

"My boy, I'm working for the Lord."

"Good salary?"

"I never think about such worldly things."

"Wal, I'll bet yer landlady does."

"I'm very sorry for you."

"Oh, I'm hunk!"

"Will you not read this tract?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm goin' ter make some tracks myself. Watch me," and he walked away with his characteristic swagger.

That was making tracks sure enough.

Well, he walked around the city until he was tired and hungry, and then returned to the hotel. That night they made their first appearance at the opera-house.

There was a very good audience present, and the show went off first rate. Shorty made a hit as usual, and the next morning the papers all spoke favorably of him. The *Knickerbocker* republished some of the amusing things that had happened since they had been out, for the reader will remember that his racket with Dodge, the hackman, and the Boston policeman were published.

This of course gave him greater popularity, and the next night the house was filled to overflowing, and Shorty received a very warm reception.

But it must not be supposed that Shorty had forgotten the porous-plaster racket, for his head was still sore from ripping the confounded thing off his hair. And in addition to that, the members of the troupe wouldn't allow him to forget it, for they were continually rigging him regarding it.

But he said nothing back, and they begun to think that he had taken a grand tumble, and would bother them no more with his jokes. How nearly they were right will be seen before long.

"Oh, they think I'm off, eh?" said he, after they had been in town three or four days. "Think I've taken a quiet tumble, do they? Well, I guess not. I'll play somethin' back on them duffers or bust. Wonder what it'll be? Confound 'em, my head is sore yet. Wonder if I couldn't work a plaster racket on them? I guess yes."

That afternoon he went to an apothecary store, and asked for a dozen porous plasters. The clerk opened his eyes and started back.

"What did you say?"

"Plasters—stickers," said Shorty.

"One?"

"Yes, one dozen."

"A dozen? Why a dozen of them will cover you all over," replied the clerk.

"No they won't, for I shan't try 'em on."

"Going to use them yourself?"

"Yes, of course I am."

"What's the matter with you?"

"Nothin'."

"Then what are you going to do with all of these plasters?"

"Goin' ter give 'em round 'mong my friends," said he, throwing a five-dollar bill upon the counter.

"Among your friends?" he asked, in still greater astonishment. "Good heavens! what an idea," and he looked curiously at Shorty, whose head barely came up to the top of the counter.

"Bully idea. Some people give tracts 'round 'mong their friends, an' they aren't worth half so much as porous plasters. See?"

"Well, you are a queer fellow, anyway. Seems to me I've seen you somewhere," he added, taking another look at him.

"Seen my picture, I s'pose."

"Where?"

"Round ther city on show bills."

"Oh, yes; you are Shorty?"

"You bet."

"But what on earth are you going to do with a dozen porous plasters?"

"Have some fun wid 'em."

"Fun? On the stage?"

"Yes; them's what we call properties. Don't you understand?"

"No, I'll be hanged if I do."

"Well, you come up ter der show ter-night an' you'll see."

"All right; I'll be there."

"Don't forget it, for this part is only for ter-night."

"All right; I shall be there, for I am curious to know what use can be made of porous plasters in a nigger show."

"All right," and taking the bundle of plasters he turned and left the store.

That clerk puzzled his brain all day long over the affair and was not only there himself early, but took three or four of his friends along to see what would come of the plasters.

The joke that he played on the whole troupe in Boston, where he pulled the chairs out from under them just as they went to sit down, will be remembered. Well the chairs were arranged in precisely the same way for the first part, just back of the curtain.

Shorty took a plaster and folded it once together, leaving the sticky side out, and placed one in each of these chairs in which the dandy darkies were to sit during the "first part." The color of the plasters were so nearly like that of the bottom of the chair that they would scarcely be noticed, unless there was a strong light, which there was not so long as the curtain remained down.

"Well, just at eight o'clock the different members of the company came from their dressing-rooms at the call of the manager, and ranged themselves along in front of their chairs, the audience, in the meantime, calling loudly for the performance to begin.

As luck would have it, most of them had been

laughing at Shorty in the dressing-rooms, and asking him if he was wearing porous plasters on his head now.

Well, they ranged themselves standing up before their respective chairs; the bell rang; up went the curtain; the end man struck his tambourine, the company bowed and took their seats ready for business.

"Opening chorus," cried the manager, and they at once began to render it.

"Oh, yes, you'll all get openin' chorus afore you get through with this performance," muttered Shorty, who stood behind the wings.

Following out the programme they gave song after song until the whole was about done with, when Shorty suddenly concluded that the healthiest place for him would be up in the flies over the stage, and so he got up there out of sight, waiting for the last song to be sung, when the company would get up and walk off as they always did.

There were three acts by Eph Horn and others before he had to go on himself, and so he had a half an hour or such a matter to lay off in, and have them cool down a little before he showed up. Eph Horn was waiting to go on without the slightest suspicion of what Shorty had been doing.

Well, as the song closed they all arose together to bow and retire; the chairs they sat in arose with them, and such a frightened lot of showmen was never seen before.

They whirled and bobbed around, knocking each other with their chairs, while the crowd in front was howling with laughter, for everyone understood that some sort of a joke had been played on them, and the drug clerk recognized the porous plasters and yelled as loud as any of the others.

The worst feature of the joke was that the audience seemed determined to call them out again with those chairs still hanging to them, and altogether it was fun alive for everybody but the sorry-looking victims.

Of course they all knew that Shorty had played the joke on them, and a lively hunt was at once started for him, each one of them swearing vengeance. But Shorty was out of sight and was rolling on the floor with suppressed laughter, and pounding his head against the hardest thing he could find, simply because he was feeling too good.

Manager Polly rushed around upon the stage, for he saw at a glance that they would chew Shorty all up if he didn't take care of him, and while they were ripping the chairs from their pantaloons, seat from seat, Eph Horn went on with his act, being well received, of course. In fact the audience was in such excellent humor now that they were easily pleased.

"Guess dat Shorty have been up to some mo' ob his jokes," said he, and as many in front had read about his pranks, this again brought down the house and made the plastered company madder, and swear louder than before. "Dat am a new way ob clearin' de stage," he added, as soon as he could be heard.

It was lucky for the fellows that they did not have to reappear in the same dresses they had worn in the first part, for they would have been laughed and gaped unmercifully, and as they all had to change for the next acts they hurried to the dressing-rooms, cursing and offering millions of dollars for Shorty. They wanted to fondle him.

When he stole down from his place of concealment just in time to go on, the manager met him.

"I shall grease my boots with you, Shorts, if you don't stop this devilry."

"Wal, they began it; they played plasters on me when we was coming from Boston, an' I don't 'low no hamfatter ter work a racket on me 'an I do nuffin'."

"Go on with your act."

The stage was waiting, and taking up his stool with a growl, he waddled on. The reception that he had received was deafening, and it was fully three minutes before he could be heard at all. And this didn't make them feel any better, knowing that his reception was most at their expense.

Manager Polly had all he could do to keep them from devouring poor Shorty, and it was not until he had threatened to discharge half a dozen of them that he could quiet them down in the least.

But order was finally restored, and the performance went on to the end. After it was over, a reporter of one of the morning papers found Shorty and got the whole history of the affair, which he proceeded at once to write up and elaborate.

The result of this was that Shorty became a hero in Albany, as he somehow managed to do in every place he visited. The published account of the affair was first-rate advertising, for the house was packed on the following night, and which, by the way, was their last one there, and Shorty was again greeted heartily.

On the following Monday the company opened in Troy at Griswold's Opera House.

Troy is only five or six miles from Albany, and is one of the brightest, liveliest cities in the United States. It is a brisk city, and contains some very brisk boys, and as many of them had heard of Shorty's pranks, they were anxious to see him, for he seemed like one of their own kind.

Consequently no minstrel troupe ever showed there to so large a house as that which greeted the California Minstrels on that occasion, although the truth was very evident that Shorty was the principal attraction. But he had friends in that audience that he never thought of, for there happened to be three of the boys who had been to school with him in Newark, they having graduated from the kind charge of Professor Bang.

The next day they called on him, and just gave him an introduction to their bright little city, taking him around to the principal local places of interest.

But the week passed by quickly, and once more they were ready to move, having been billed to play the following week in Buffalo.

Shorty and the other members of the troupe were walking about Union Depot, waiting for the Buffalo express train to arrive. His reform schoolboy friends had taken leave of him, and he was all anxiety to get away, for nothing pleased him like being always on the move somewhere.

He had his eye on a countryman and his wife who stood with their arms full of bundles, and looking anxiously up and down the track. It would be fifteen or twenty minutes before the train arrived, but still this couple would not set down their bundles for fear that the train would come, and they might not have time to get on board of it.

"Bout time?" he asked, as Shorty passed him.

"Be here in just one minute," said he.

"Oh, Nancy!"

"Oh, Joshua!" she exclaimed.

"We'd better be gettin' ready," said he, just as though they were not so.

Just then a switch engine backed into the depot with a car.

"There you are," yelled Shorty, and the country couple made a dive for it.

"Here—here! stop her," he called, loudly, and just then it did stop, and he ran to get into the car, followed by his wife.

But of course they were bounced, and told that it wasn't the train at all. Then he went for Shorty.

"He says it arn't the train at all."

"Well, who said it was?"

"Why, didn't you sing out 'there you are?'"

"Yes; an' yer *was* there, wa'n't yer? But what's that to do wid ther trains, hey?"

"Young feller, I 'bout half think you did that ter fule me," said he, savagely.

"Don't get mad, Joshua," said his wife.

"Oh, I understand all 'bout how wicked 'tis ter get mad; but I won't 'low nobody ter fule me," said he.

"I guess he didn't mean to do anything bad."

"Course I didn't. Where be yer goin', anyway?"

"Up ter Weedsport; we live thar," said he.

"Oh, that's all right, here comes the train," said he, as a local train from Albany rolled into the depot.

They made a scramble for it, and forced their way into one of the cars before the passengers could get out.

They stowed themselves and their bundles into a seat, and began to wait for them to move, but when a brakeman came along and informed them that the train would go back to Albany in about half an hour, he got mad enough to fly.

"Whar's that darnation little lummux? I'll eat him!" he exclaimed, as they picked up and got out once more.

But Shorty was out of sight just then.

CHAPTER XXIV.

We took leave of Shorty at the Union Depot, in Troy, at which city they had been playing, and were just now waiting for the Buffalo express train.

It will also be remembered that Shorty was having some fun with a country couple, having sent them into the wrong car. But that countryman was mad now, and was looking for Shorty, as though very anxious to find him for some especial purpose.

But Shorty was taking good care to keep out of the way. In fact, he was acting just as though he didn't wish to be found.

"Swanny, I hope them ere keers won't come afore I get a chance ter spank that ere pesky little rascal," said he, groping around among the waiting passengers, still loaded down with bags and bundles.

"Now don't lose your temper," pleaded his wife, following him around with an anxious expression on her face, and with a full share of the bundles.

"Darnation! it seems as if I must. If I don't get a chance ter spank that boy, I'm sure I shall have ter swar right out," said he. "Where is he, I wonder?"

Just then one of the porters came pushing a baggage-barrow along, and as it is notorious that the never turn out for anybody, or even condescend to give notice to any luckless person who may be in their way, so in this instance he ran plump into the old countryman, tumbling him over backwards upon the barrow and continuing right along just as though nothing had happened out of the usual course of events.

The old man kicked and sprawled like a freshly-caught crab, but being encumbered with his bags and bundles, which he refused to let go of, he could not escape, and was wheeled along amid the laughter of the passengers and the frantic yells of himself and wife.

"Stop it—stop it!" he yelled.

"Say, Mister, you've got my husband there," screamed the old woman.

"Got him checked?" asked the porter, with a broad grin.

"Stop it—stop it!" bawled the old man.

"Stop it, an' let him get off, or I'll check *you*," put in the anxious wife.

"Go an' see the baggagemaster, mum; I'm only a smasher."

"Everlastin' whales! will you stop?" roared the old man.

But just as the porter arrived at the spot where he intended to stop, he dropped the handles of the barrow with a bang, which upset the old man and caused him to turn a backward somersault, mixing him up with his luggage and that on the trunk in the most confused manner, and to make matters worse, his wife threw herself upon him with all her bundles, and with the tenderest inquiries as to his health, etc., nearly smothered him, and presented a decidedly comical picture.

Hardly had they got upon their feet before the train they were waiting for came thundering into the depot, and of course, all was anxiety and hurry right away.

"Oh, yu blasted fule!" was his first growl.

"Don't lose your Christian temper," said his wife, warningly.

"Christian thunder!"

"Oh—oh!"

"I will swar. Devil—darn! I don't care a cent if I be a deacon. Human nater can't stand every-thing," and he turned again to go for the baggagemaster.

"Here's your train, boss," said he.

"I've a darned good mind tu miss the train, jist for the sake of thrashin' thunder out of yu," said he, shaking his fist at him.

"All aboard!" shouted Shorty, who had been watching the racket, and laughing himself almost to death.

"Oh, Lord, they're going!" moaned the old lady.

"Do hurry up."

The irate countryman, gathering up his bags and bundles, and while still growling and threatening all sorts of vengeance on the laughing porter he led the way towards the cars.

"Oh, dear—oh, dear! how is this all agoin' to end?" moaned his wife.

"The Lord only knows."

"But do hurry up, for I'm 'fraid they will go away and leave us."

And loaded down as they were they scrambled into one of the cars and dropped into the first seat they found empty.

Shorty watched them and got into the same car, as did several members of the troupe, and took a seat a little way behind them, his mug illuminated with a big grin as though he was enjoying it hugely, which of course he was, for he loved deviltry better than he did his victuals.

"Ah, the Lord be thanked!" said she, "we are on the train at last."

But the old man made no reply. He was too mad for utterance, and as soon as he got seated and his bundles bestowed around and about him out of the way, he stood up and began to look around inquiringly.

Shorty was watching him, and dropped down in his seat out of sight; and to make surer, he pulled down his hat over his eyes.

"I wonder if that darned little serpent is on board?" he mused.

"Don't mind him, Elisha."

"But I du, though; consarn his pieter, for it was all on his account."

"And only think, Elisha, how you swore, and you a deacon of the Free Will Baptist Church!"

"Wall, hu could help it? Guess if you'd been picked up an' rolled over as I was that you'd a rounced 'round 'mong the commandments some if not more. Oh, if I could only see him," he added, looking around.

"Oh, law! 'Tain't likely he's on board; more'n probable he was only a street boy."

Just then the train gave a sudden start, as they sometimes do, and threw the old deacon back into his seat with a bounce and thud that completely smashed a hat box, in which was the new "Sabby day" hat that he had bought in Troy.

Then the wife mourned and the deacon forgot all about piety for a few moments; the car became suddenly warm on account of the violent language that he used as he proceeded to straighten out that badly mashed cady. She was doing her best, although quite as sorry as he was, to keep him quiet, or at least within such bounds that he should not give himself away.

Shorty, and the other passengers as well, were enjoying the sorrow of the old couple, for it had been so comical all the way through that they could not help it.

"Do be quiet, Elisha! people will hear you going on so, and maybe it will get back to Weedsport; then think what people would say!"

"Darn people! darn Weedsport! darn everybody in the world! haven't I got enough tu make John the Baptist swar?"

"No, no, Elisha, he would not swear," said she, softly.

"Wal, I'm goin' tu give vent tu my felinks, if the whole town of Weedsport knows it. Look at that new hat that I just paid six dollars for," said he, holding it up.

"Put him out!" exclaimed somebody among the passengers near by.

"Put him out!" re-echoed Shorty.

"Put hu out?" exclaimed the irate old man, leaping to his feet, and Shorty ducked down out of sight as he did so.

"Put him out," he called again, from his concealment.

"I'd like tu see somebody put me out, I would, darned well. I arn't quite so spry as I was onct, but I'm a steer yet, yu bet; an' if anybody wants tu put me out, they may as well try it now afore the keers git agoin' any faster."

"Oh, Elisha! Do sit down and behave yourself," said his wife, tugging at his arm.

"I want tu be put out, I du," he exclaimed.

The conductor entered the car just then and began to take up the tickets, so the passengers said no more, and waited to see what the result would be.

"Elisha, there is the conductor," pleaded his wife.

"Darn the conductor, I want tu be put out," he yelled again, as he spanked his big fists together.

The conductor looked up and took him in, but kept calmly collecting tickets until he reached the seat, into which his wife had by that time succeeded in pulling him.

"What's the matter, deacon?" he asked.

"There! I told you that somebody'd know you," moaned she, softly.

"Wal, somebody's been yellin' tu put me out," said he, somewhat subdued.

"What for?"

"Because I was jawin', I s'pose."

"What is the trouble, anyway?"

"Trouble! There's been nothin' but trouble ever since I got into the kee-house at Troy. Fust a darned boy told me a lie, an' got us onto the wrong train; then a man ran into me with a darned hand-cart or somethin', an' we came mighty near losin' the keers. Wal, after I got in here I stood up tu see 'f I could see the darned little runt,' an' while I was lookin' round, the plaguey keers gave a jirk, an' I set down on this ere new hat that happened tu be on the seat."

"Well, that was a little rough, I must say," said the conductor, punching their tickets.

"Rough! I should say so. Only jist bought it, an' gave six dollars hard cash. Wal, it made me mad, an' I jawed, an' then somebody began a yellin' tu put me out, darn 'em."

"Oh, well, I guess they won't, if you keep pretty quiet," said the conductor, laughing and passing to the passengers in the next seat.

"Darned if I shouldn't like tu see 'em try it," he growled, on a lower key.

But she gradually got the best of him, and gave him a subduing lecture, which had the effect of making him look becomingly sheepish.

Shorty watched them until the storm had blown over, and then began to concoct some other mischief, for that was about all he could think of, and the older he grew the more he was up to it.

But there wasn't much of an opportunity in the car, and besides he thought it best not to show himself to the deacon just then, lest he might have a bounce that would not be welcome, and give his friends a chance to have the laugh on him.

And so he allowed his thoughts to wander in other directions and tried to think how he could get even with Rice, the fellow who did the fancy wench business, and who had given him a sudden ride on the toe of his boot in payment for a little joke that he had played on him. He thought of everything that he had ever played, and finally concluded how he would work a little job in retaliation.

Well, after riding for some time the train stopped at Syracuse, and here the deacon and his wife had to get out and take the accommodation train, as the express did not stop at Weedsport. They got out upon the platform of the depot, loaded down with their bundles, and began to look about them.

Shorty went to a window that was open near by them, and just as soon as the train began to move, and he felt safe, he called out:

"Hello, deacon, how you was? How's yer new hat?"

"Great Beelzebub! There's that same little cuss!" exclaimed the old man.

"Day, day! ta, ta!"

"Stop them keers," yelled the old man, dropping his bundles; "stop 'em; there's a runt on board that I want ter lick." But the cars didn't stop.

"Ta, ta, deacon, don't get your shirt off," he called, as the train moved away.

They looked back out of the windows and saw him dancing a wild war dance; but how he ever got out of it, or whether he got satisfaction from anybody was not known. One thing, however, Shorty knew that he didn't have satisfaction out of him, and so he felt happy.

The members of the troupe suspected somehow that Shorty was at the bottom of the old deacon's trouble, and now this convinced them of it.

"Shorty, if you ever live to get back to New York, you will be doing well," said Eph Horn.

"He never will, if he don't behave himself, and stop his devilry," said Rice.

"Let us hope he will keep on with it, then, if there is a prospect of his getting killed," said Pettingill.

"Oh, you hamfatters, skip the gutter. What's der matter wid you's, anyway? You like fun just as well as anybody else, but haven't der nerve ter play anything."

"Well, you'll lack nerve if I ever catch you playin' anything more on me," said Rice.

"You duffers lay everything on ter me," he growled.

"Well, of course; you are up to some devilry all the while, and why not accuse you?"

"I won't have it."

"Well, I'm telling you that you'll get it if you play any more tricks on us."

Shorty walked back to his seat, and pulling his hat down over his eyes, prepared to get ready for sleep.

"No stickin' plasters, now, fellers," said he, settling down.

They exchanged glances, and a laugh followed,

for well they remembered that they had been the first ones to play the porous-plaster joke on him, and that he had not only got more than even with them for it, but had made them ridiculous before an audience.

Shorty was soon snoring, and they began to suggest and speculate upon some racket that they could play on him while in this condition. But they could not work anything very good, on account of Shorty's eyes, which seemed to open just in time to spoil the business, although they managed to have considerable sport before they arrived at Buffalo.

Here they were billed to play a week at Shelby's Terrace Theater, and after the long ride, all hands were glad to get on their legs once more and have a little walk.

Buffalo is one of the liveliest and most beautiful cities in the Union, and showmen always regard it as the very best show town to be found, for it must be a poor show, indeed, that will not draw well, on account of the large floating population to be met with there.

A big crowd welcomed the California Minstrels, and, as usual, Shorty carried off the honors of the evening, and at once became a prime favorite there, as he had always done wherever he went.

This was, of course, understood by the other members of the company, and yet they somehow could not get used to such a state of affairs, and took every opportunity they could to bother and annoy him.

Especially was this the case with Rice, the wench impersonator, and Shorty received at his suggestions, the worst of several jobs.

"All right," he mused, "them hamfatters know me, or if they don't, I'll introduce myself."

Having concluded how he could fix a racket on Rice, he began to work it out as follows: He noticed that he always stood by one of the wings for fifteen minutes or so before going on, and in the character of a *prima donna*, he was dressed in the height of gay fashion.

So, one night, he quietly fixed things by fastening a hook and line to one of the wings, leaving the end with the hook on it snugly tucked up out of sight, where he could reach it without being observed; and that night, as he stood there dressed and waiting for his turn to go on, Shorty stole up and astened the hook to the big overskirt and bustle which he wore with so much tact and burlesque grace.

As soon as he had fastened the hook all right he skipped around on the opposite side of the stage, where he stood looking as sober as a goat that had just swallowed a Monday's washing.

It so happened, or rather he planned it so, that there was nobody standing near but the stage manager and Mr. Polly, the proprietor, and as they were engaged at the time, no notice was taken of Shorty, and Rice himself did not notice him until he appeared at the wing on the opposite side of the stage.

Well, the act that was on at the time being finished, the scene shifters ran on a front room scene, and with a change in the music by the orchestra, on glided Rice in full feather, looking perfectly "killing" as a fancy wench, and receiving a generous round of applause.

The act he was to do was "The Girl of the Period," and he did it in his own inimitable manner, prancing and swelling back and forth before the footlights, but not going far enough to feel the line, so nicely had the little spirit of mischief calculated it.

But when his act was finished, or rather when in the act of going off to make a finish to it, and when within about five feet of the exit place, the line tautened up, and rip—rip! fiz! sq—u—r—ttl was heard, and the next instant Rice's bustle and huge pannier left their places and fell upon the stage, while he, half naked behind, and showing his own dress underneath, rushed wildly off, hardly knowing what had happened to him.

The yell that went up from the audience was enough to deafen a Lowell mill girl; but whether it was a gag and had been done on purpose to create a laugh, or whether an accident, they of course could not determine. But at all events they laughed and roared like mad.

Rice stood for a moment almost paralyzed, and then the ludicrousness of the mishap dawned upon him. And yet of course he could not go on and recover the articles, so he asked Shorty to do so.

"All right, Ricey," said he, and on he darted with his comical swagger, and, amid a renewal of the hurrah, picked up the toggery, made a funny mug at the audience, and while doing so managed to rip the fish hook out of the dress and to throw it back without attracting any particular notice.

"Don't see what you am laughing 'bout," said he, to the audience, "bustles am liable fo' ter 'splode almost any time," and then waltzed off amid another yell of merriment.

Rice hurried around to meet him, and if there ever was a comical-looking performer in the world, he was one.

"What in thunder is the matter?" demanded Manager Polly.

"That's what I would like to know," said Rice, taking the bustle and things from Shorty, and looking them over.

"It is devilish strange that there must always be something happening you fellows. Go on with that clog dance!" he added, calling to the dancers, who stood ready to go on, but who were laughing over Rice's strange mishap and forgetting their business.

Disgusted and confused, Rice turned away, and

went to his dressing-room, while Shorty improved the first chance he got to pull in and hide the fish-hook and line.

To everybody but Shorty it was one of the most unaccountable things in the world, and to no one more so than to poor Rice.

He examined the garments, but could only find a little tear, where Shorty had yanked the fish-hook out, in fact, and beyond this, there wasn't the slightest thing to show how or why it had happened.

Other members of the troupe gathered around him as he stood there looking over his raped bustle and listening to his story of the mishap; and the majority of them came to the conclusion that he must have caught his dress in something on the stage, a nail or something that produced the mischief, although exactly how such a thing could happen they could not explain.

"I'll bet ten dollars that Shorty had something to do with it," said Charley Pettingill.

"Nonsense; he was standing just where I came off," said Rice.

"Are you sure?"

"Of course I am. Didn't he go on and take the things off?"

"Well, I guess you took them off yourself, by the way the people in front howled."

"Oh, that's all right, Ricey. They took it for a guy, and it saved you from the *encore*," said Eph Horn.

"Yes, I understand that, Eph; but what I am trying to find out is, how the deuce did it happen, anyway? Can you see?"

"I could if there had been a little more pulled off," said Eph, and then there was a laugh at Rice's expense in the dressing-room.

"I'll bet that Shorty had something to do with it, I'm telling you," said Pettingill, again.

"Impossible. How?"

"Well, that I can't tell; but one thing that we all know is, that he is at the bottom of all the mischief in the company except when we put up a job on him. Hark!" he added, as the applause of the audience reached their ears. "There he goes on for his banjo act."

Some of them went up upon the stage, and others remained where they were to listen, for even to the performers themselves Shorty was always interesting.

This time they heard him sing in his own inimitable way, making it up as he went along:

Oh, ladies, I've a warning
Dat I'll give unto you,
See dat your harness is all right,
From chignon down to shoe,
For little things may make a muss,
When down the street you glide.
An' if yer bustles amn't right,
Dat bustle might explode.

CHORUS.

Tie on your bustles, tie 'em strong and tight,
An' don't forget de accident ter-night.

Dar is a man in our gang,
His back-door name am Rice,
He plays de fancy wenchies,
An' dresses 'em so nice;
He couldn't work de bustle,
In which he allus showed,
An' as he went a kickin' up,
Dat bustle did explode!

CHORUS.—Tie on your, &c.

This, of course, brought the house down with a vengeance, for they saw that he made it up as he went along, and that it was pretty good, but Rice was mad enough to eat onions. He was not sure that Shorty played the joke on him, but he saw that he was making fun of him, so he resolved to get square with him for that at least.

Standing in the corner was a piece of old tin speaking tube about ten feet long, and as there was a bowl of flower on a table close by, that was to be used in the last act, he grabbed a handful of it and placed it in this tube just as Shorty began to sing the third verse.

"You little duffer, I'll fix you," said he, and creeping just as far out as he could without being seen by the audience, he aimed the tube at his face and blew through it with all his force, sending out a cloud of flour, and instantly making Shorty look like a speckled pig.

That was a "finish" that neither he nor the audience had dreamed of, and while they roared with laughter, Shorty tumbled over backwards from his stool, and hastily gathering himself up, he got out of sight of that audience as quickly as possible, you bet.

The next instant there was a muss behind the scenes, for Shorty's head went bang into Rice's bread-basket, knocking him over backwards upon an old bass drum, into which he sat so far that only his head and heels were visible.

But Manager Polly was quickly on hand, and again made it lively for both of them, while the stage manager had all he could do to keep the show going properly.

"Rice, you are discharged, and Shorty, I shall murder you after the performance! No words from either of you, I saw it all."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE performance that night in Buffalo ended all right, thanks to Manager Polly; and knowing that

the whole company was down on Shorty for his mischief, he took him under his special charge, so that they might not attempt to get square with him after the show.

But the next night was to be the last in the city, and several of them made up their minds that they would put up a job on Shorty that would make him sick, so sick that he would forget his deviltry.

He was to do his monkey act, and they put their heads together to fix him in this account of the manager's protection, and they laughed and quizzed the fellows all the next day.

"Guess they won't fool me much more," said he, while thinking over the fun he had had the night before.

"Shorty, come here," said Manager Polly, coming into the reading-room of the hotel.

"All right," said he, following the manager out.

"Yes."

"All right, I don't care; I can get a show wid Dan Bryant."

"Well——" and the manager scratched his head in silence, for he knew that what he had said was true.

"Guess I'll go, anyway," said he, getting up and walking off with a swagger.

"You will?" asked the manager, in surprise.

"Yes, I'm sick of this gang, anyhow."

This was a turn in affairs that Polly had not anticipated. But he had awakened a feeling in Shorty that he felt would make him trouble, and so he hastened to soften it.

"But you know you engaged yourself to me for a year, Shorty."

"Wal, an' yer goin' ter bounce me."

"But why can't you behave yourself?"

"There's always a muss of some kind, an' I'm goin' ter waltz out."

"The deuce you are!" they all exclaimed.

"Yer bet I am; I can git in wid Dan Bryant all hunk."

The others exchanged glances.

"Oh, don't get mad with us, Shorty, old man. We'll bury the hatchet."

"That's all right; but ther old man said how he was going ter bounce me."

"No, he won't. That's all right. Come and have drink."

"Wal, that's kinder nice talk. Guess I'll toss in one," said he, getting up with a grin, and following them towards the bar-room.

A drink or two and a fresh cigar made things all serene once more, and Shorty was ready to forgive everybody, and while they were laughing and talking, a long, lank, cadaverous-looking man came in.



He blew through it with all his force, sending out a cloud of flour, and instantly making Shorty look like a speckled pig.

They went into the bar-room and sat down.

"Now, Shorty, I want to have a talk with you," began Polly, and there was a look of serious earnestness in his face.

"All right, boss; sail in," said he.

"You must stop your deviltry, Shorty, or I shall have to let you go."

"What? Lemme go? Go where?"

"Go home to New York."

"Great bung-starters! What's up now?" asked Shorty, in alarm.

"Well, you have played the devil so much that the rest of the company have kicked, and threaten to leave me if I don't bounce you."

"Oh, they go shoot themselves!"

"But that won't do."

"What've I done?"

"Good gracious! What haven't you done?"

"Nuffin' more'n they have ter me."

"But they wouldn't bother you if you minded your own business, and let them alone. The very devil seems to possess you, and always did."

"I know you got ahold of me about as soon's anybody," growled Shorty.

"Oh, that's all right, but I have been a good friend of yours all the while; and now, if you don't drop on yourself, I shall shake you."

Shorty was badly taken back, but made no reply.

"Do you understand?"

"Course I do. But I think you orter warm dem other snoozers."

"Don't I tell you that they wouldn't bother you if you only left them alone?"

"All right."

"Yes, it is all right, Shorty; but you must remember what I tell you about this."

"An' if der's another racket, I'll have ter crawl off on my ear!"

"Them other hamfatters are as much ter blame as I am."

"But if they will let up, will you agree to do the same?"

"I won't bother 'em if they'll lemme be."

"All right. I'll speak to them, and have an agreement entered into to that effect," said Polly, getting up and going from the room.

"I don't like this gang for a cent, only Eph Horn, and I guess I'll git away from them anyhow. I know I can git an engagement with Dan Bryant, in New York, an' have more fun'n I can on the go. I'll work it. I'll make believe let up on these duffers, till I can hear from Dan, an' then I'll come down on 'em again wid a racket that'll make ther hair curl," he mused, after he had been left alone by the manager.

This was really the opening wedge that eventually separated Shorty from the California Minstrels.

Manager Polly went to the other members of his company, and tried to mend matters by saying that Shorty had agreed to play no more practical jokes, if they would do the same, and although they agreed to it, and everything seemed to be lovely again, yet two or three of them resolved to carry out their plan of revenge in spite of all promises.

And yet, in order to do it without being known or suspected, they had to employ a couple of outsiders to do the work, and after the arrangements had been made they went to Shorty and pretended to be friends.

"Let us all take a tumble, Shorty, and say no more about it," said they, offering him their hands.

"Oh, that's all right, boys," said he; "but I'm goin' ter shake yer all before long."

"How so?"

He was so odd-looking that he at once attracted attention.

"Gentlemen, would you like to have your heads examined?" said he, gazing around.

"Well, I don't think there's anything in mine," said Charley Pettingill.

"No, thank you, I employ a fine-toothed comb," said Eph Horn.

"And I'm bald-headed," added another.

"Wal, I don't mind if yer go through me," said Shorty, swaggering up to the man and taking off his hat.

"Gentlemen, you evidently misunderstand me. When I asked you if you would have your heads examined I did not mean, as you seem to think, that I wished to examine them in regard to their sanitary condition. I am a phrenologist."

"A what?" asked Shorty.

"A phrenologist. By examining your head I can give you a true chart that will show your disposition, tendencies, talents, failings; the best course for you to pursue in life; in fact, tell you all about yourself."

"I'll take a piece of that, ole man," said Shorty. "Shall I examine your phrenological bumps?" asked the man.

"No; go for my nut."

This created a laugh, and the phrenologist seated Shorty on a chair and began to feel of the bumps of his head, while the others gathered around to see the sport.

"You are a peculiar character," began the man.

"Yes, I'm a hamfatter."

"In some respects you are remarkable."

"Ever see me do the monk business?" he asked, looking up at the man.

"I never saw you before that I know of. Your 'reverence' is small."

"No, boss, my reverence is Shorty."
 "Imagination not large. Love of home exceedingly small."
 "I should say so, when I've got no home to love."
 "I mean that you are just as well contented in one place as another."
 "Got me there, old man, every time."
 "Language quite good."
 "There, you duffers allus said that I didn't use good language," said he, addressing the gang, whereat there was a laugh.
 "Your imitation is very large; music is large," continued the phrenologist.
 "Large! You bet!"
 "Mirth, very large. Fond of fun, I should say; love a joke very much."
 "You bet, especially if it's on somebody else."
 "Don't care much about the opposite sex."
 "Yes I do; I like the monkey business first-rate."
 "I mean the opposite sex."
 "Wal, arn't monkeys ther opposite sex?"
 "I refer to ladies."
 "Oh, thunder, why didn't you say so? No, don't think I was ever mashed."
 "Don't care much for parents."
 "No, I guess not, seeing as how I never see 'em. Don't think I ever had any."
 "Not very fond of children."
 "Don't know; never had any."
 "Fond of good living."
 "Yer bet; ax me to dinner," said he, and this caused even the solemn-looking phrenologist to laugh; and having succeeded in giving a very good outline of Shorty's character, he received his fee, and then went for Eph Horn.
 And so the afternoon wore away, and they had lots of fun with the phrenologist, although he succeeded remarkably well in giving a truthful character of every one of them.
 That evening there was a good house, and the performance went off all right. Shorty was feeling first-rate and received a hearty reception, on account of the joke he had played on Rice, the female impersonator, the evening before, for it had become generally known that he was a practical joker.
 But the conspirators were on the alert, watching for his last act, wherein he appeared as a monkey, with both Eph Horn and Charley Pettingill.
 The act has been given in one of the chapters of this story, and will probably be remembered by the readers, but as he finished and came off, one of the company told him that somebody wished to see him a moment at the stage door.
 "Wait till I dress," said Shorty.
 "No, he only wants to see you a moment at the door, and has been waiting for you for the last hour."
 Without suspecting anything wrong, he started for the stage-door, going through the long entry in order to reach it, and when he arrived there he found two men in waiting.
 "Who wants ter see me?" he asked.
 "We do," said one of them, a big, strong man, picking him up as he would a baby, and darting out of the door into the back street.
 Close by the curbstone stood a carriage, the door of which was open. Into this the man took him, followed by his comrade, who closed the door, and the carriage instantly started.
 "Hold on! What's this yer givin' me?" demanded Shorty.
 "You keep your mouth shut or we'll give you a big bust in the jaw that'll make you sick," said the man who held him.
 "But what are yer goin' ter do with me?"
 "Give you a ride, that's all."
 "But I won't have it."
 "You must."
 "What for?"
 "For fun."
 "Whose fun?"
 "Some of your friends that you've had fun with at different times," was the reply.
 "Is this a racket, say?"
 "You bet it is."
 "Where are you goin' ter take me?"
 "Wait and see."
 "But take me back to the theater so I can get this monk dress off."
 "Oh, no, that'll do."
 "But I tell yer I won't have it."
 "Oh, yes you will."
 "I'll shout for a policeman."
 "All right. Try it if you like."

Shorty made a spring towards the door as if to throw it open, but the man pulled him back, and the next instant he was unconscious, for they had applied a sponge with chloroform on it to his nose, and he was quickly beyond all power of resistance.
 What happened after that he never knew; but when he returned to consciousness it was broad daylight, and he was lying under the edge of a stack of hay that stood by the wayside out in the country.
 It was a long time before he could collect his senses sufficiently to understand whether he was alive or dead, but even when he came to the conclusion that he was still in the land of the living he could form no idea where he was or how he came to be there.
 Little by little his memory began to act, and he recollected the strange transaction at the stage-door of the theater, where he was kidnapped by the two men whom he called to mind; but beyond that all was a blank, although he could remember the conversation he had with one of them, and this led him to the belief that he was the victim of a joke played upon him by members of the company.
 And what a racket it was.
 There he was, he knew not where, but out in a field, far from any house, and dressed like a monkey.
 But where were the other members of the company? It was now Sunday morning, and he knew that arrangements had been made to take the midnight express from Buffalo to Cleveland, and was it possible that they had all gone on without him?
 Yes, it was just possible, for the manager was so busy that he did not notice that he was not on board the train until the next morning; and then upon making inquiry some of them told him that they suspected Shorty had taken the New York train, as they had heard him threaten to do so, and that he was going to play with Dan Bryant.
 This was a blow to Polly, and he did not know what to do without him, he being his strongest card. But he knew that Shorty had threatened to go, and so he reluctantly came to the conclusion that he had gone back on him.
 But the two or three conspirators who had put up the job to get clear of Shorty kept their own counsel, and congratulated themselves on being well rid of a troublesome joker and a chap who outshone them all. This was one of the strongest motives for their action after all, for they were jealous of his popularity.
 But let us return to Shorty.
 He struggled to his feet and looked around. There was no house in sight and not a person. A turnpike road ran along near by, and he went out to the fence which shut it out from the field where he then was.
 It stretched away in either direction as far as his eye could see, but which way would take him back to Buffalo he could not tell to save his skin.
 But if he knew, how could he go along the road in such a dress? Besides, his clothes had been left in the dressing-room at the theatre, with all his money. He was dead broke and forty miles from anywhere for aught he knew.
 "Wal, I have worked rackets; I have heard of them, but this takes the pot," said he, as he sat on the top rail of a fence and looked sadly up and down the road. "This lets me out. It was a job of them duffers to shake me, an' I guess I'm shook good enough. Oh, if I could only get back ter the theater and get my togs."
 Presently he heard the barking of dogs down by the edge of the woods, and concluded that somebody must live near by. Then he saw a carriage coming about half a mile away, and his first impulse was to wait until it came along, and try and get a ride somewhere.
 "But I'd scare everybody in this dress. I'll take it off. No, that won't do, for I've got nothin' else on but a very short undershirt. Great snakes, what a fix I'm in."
 Hardly knowing what to do, he got down into some bushes on the other side of the fence and secreted himself until after the carriage had gone by; and then he once more got upon the fence and sat there, the very picture of sadness and disgust. Poor devil, he was never in such a box before in his life.
 After remaining there for some time he went across the road into a little thicket of trees and tried to console himself; but it was dreadful hard work.

While seated her on a stone, he was suddenly startled by the appearance of two hunting-dogs, and they were as much taken aback as he was, evidently, for they stood a moment and regarded the strange game with no common interest.
 Then they began to bark loudly. He spoke to them and tried to convince them that he was a human being, but they did not believe it; and when he seized a stick and tried to drive them away, they became furious and flew at him savagely.
 Shorty darted around a tree to avoid them, but they being two against him, made it lively; and, so, seeing no other way, he started to climb the tree to get out of their reach. By the tail of his monkey dress, and it tore it out by the roots.
 But he escaped further harm at that time, and just as he had reached the first limb of the tree, the hunter came up, and seeing the strange game that his dogs had treed, he gave Shorty a charge of bird shot from one of the barrels of his gun, and was just about giving him another when he called out:
 "Don't shoot, Mister! For God's sake don't shoot me!"
 The hunter started back in alarm.
 "It's all right, boss; don't shoot," he called again.
 The man drew near, with looks of curiosity and alarm.
 "It's all right," said Shorty.
 "What the devil are you, anyway?" asked the hunter.
 "Oh, I'm all right. Call off yer dogs an' I'll come down."
 The hunter did so and he descended.
 "What are you?"
 "A chap like yourself."
 "A chap! Where in thunder did you come from?"
 "From Buffalo; I'm in the show biz."
 "The show business? I should say so."
 "Yes; with ther Californy Minstrels."
 "Well, I should say you belonged to a menagerie. But what the devil are you doing here?"
 "I give it up, boss. Yer see I play monkey business in our show, an' a couple of chaps took me from the theater last night with my dress on, and brought me out here in a carriage."
 "What for?"
 "For a lark, I s'pose. They gave me somethin' that took away my senses, an' I didn't know anythin' 'til this mornin'."
 "That is rather thin. Take off your rig and let me see you."
 "All right," and he proceeded to unhook the suit, greatly to the astonishment of the hunter and his dogs.
 The shot that had been fired at him had done him but little damage, owing to the thickness of his dress, and if he could only get back to Buffalo, which he learned was about five miles distant, he would be all right.
 The man took a great interest in him of course, and after listening to his story started with him back to his house, nearly a mile away, beyond the woods which stood by the road.
 Here, of course, his advent created great excitement among the family, but after he had been provided with some clothing and washed up a little, he looked a trifle more human and was given something to eat.
 Then the man harnessed up a horse and wagon and started with him for the city, where he arrived about noon, and went directly to the theatre. After considerable trouble he found the watchman, with whom he was acquainted, and was allowed to go to the dressing-room, where he found his clothes and money all right. He paid the farmer for his trouble, and after explaining matters to all hands, he started for the hotel.
 Here he found that the other members of the company had gone, as calculated, and he was left entirely alone. It was a dirty shake.
 "That let's me out," he muttered. "I'll never go with that gang again. I don't like 'em, an', besides, they'd have der laugh on me, bad. No, I'm off for New York," said he, and that afternoon he took the train back to the scenes of his early exploits.
 Here we leave him at present, but his many pranks and adventures have amused our readers so much, that we are certain they would not like to spare him for long; consequently he will appear again in another laughable story called: "SHORTY IN LUCK."

[THE END.]

IF YOU WANT TO HAVE A GOOD LAUGH,

— Buy a Copy of —

THE 5 CENT COMIC LIBRARY.
 ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY.

— The Following VERY FUNNY Stories Have Already Been Published: —

- | | | |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| No. 1. Two Dandies of New York; or, The Funny Side of Everything, | - - - - - | By Tom Teaser |
| " 2. Cheeky Jim, the Boy From Chicago; or, Nothing too Good for Him, | - - - - - | By Sam Smiley |
| " 3. G. G. G. Joe; or, Not a Bit Like His Uncle, | - - - - - | By Tom Teaser |
| " 4. Shorty; or, Kicked Into Good Luck, | - - - - - | By Peter Pad |